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Edited by C. K. OGDEN, M.A.

The Migration of Symbols

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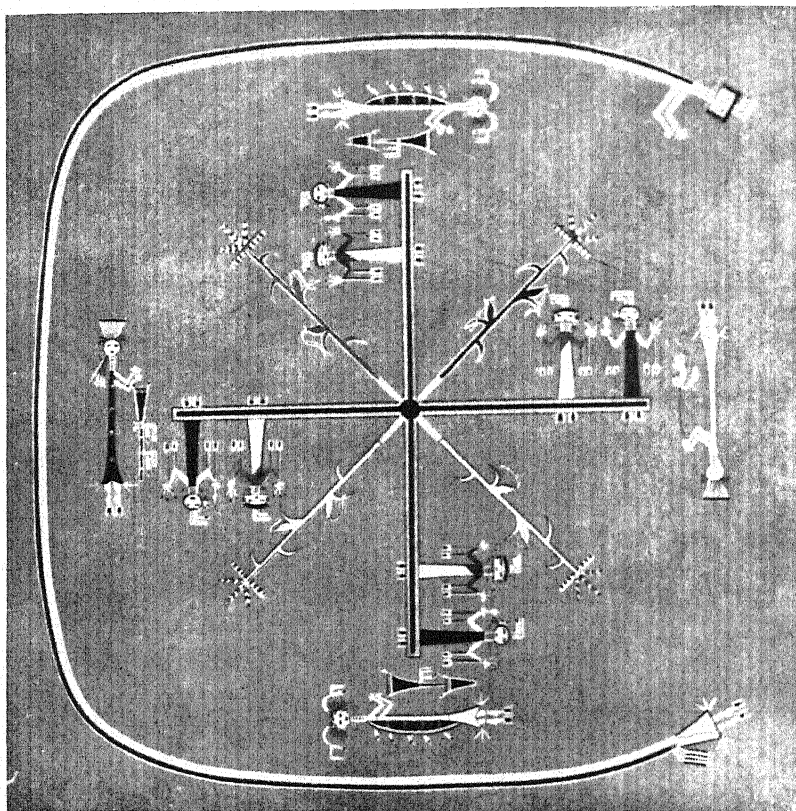
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THE "WHIRLING LOGS" CELESTIAL SWASTIKA OF NAVAHO RED INDIANS.

The outer curving figure is the rainbow goddess.

(From *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. VI.)

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The Migration of Symbols

and their Relations to Beliefs and Customs

By

DONALD A. MACKENZIE

Author of *Ancient Man in Britain*, *Myths of Pre-Columbian America*, etc.

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LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO., LTD.

NEW YORK : ALFRED A. KNOPF

1926



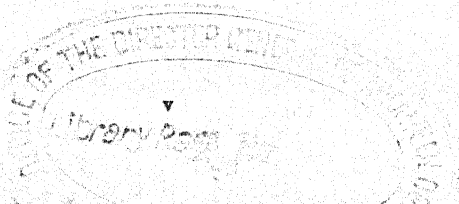
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FOREWORD

WHEN Polybius (xxxi, 3) tells us of the international games which Antiochus Epiphanes instituted at Daphne (B.C. 165), as a rival attraction to the Macedonian games of Aemilius Paulus, the Roman pro-consul, he enters into details regarding the picturesque procession of thousands of warriors armed in Roman fashion, and of thousands of Mysians, Cilicians, Thracians, and Galati (Celts), and goes on to say :

*"The number of images of gods it is impossible to tell completely ; for the images of every god or demi-god or hero accepted by mankind were carried there, some gilded, and others adorned with gold-embroidered robes, and the myths belonging to each, according to accepted tradition, were represented by the most costly symbols."*¹

The method which I have adopted in this volume in dealing with a number of ancient and widely-distributed symbols, seems not only to be justified but actually called for by Polybius's explicit statement which connects symbols with myths and with the gods. Consequently, I have not assumed that the swastika, the spiral, etc., were, even to begin with, entirely meaningless, and that they should be regarded, as some incline to regard them, merely as manifestations of the "instinct to decorate" alleged to be a characteristic of "man in his savage state". Instead of accepting so hazardous a view, and indulging in theories regarding "mental processes" (of which so little is really known), and regarding "art motifs" (as if the ancient peoples had no "luck motifs"), I have made search for texts, for myths and for customs which throw light on the problems presented by outstanding designs greatly favoured from an early period by various peoples and over wide areas.

It would appear, when consideration is given to the mental habits of the peoples who favoured certain persisting designs, that we should first endeavour to understand an ancient art before undertaking to analyse it on purely æsthetic grounds—that we should begin with the sources of inspiration rather than with the

¹ E. Shuckburgh's translation.

skill displayed in execution. In this connexion, it cannot be overlooked that all the great ancient arts were rooted in religious and magico-religious beliefs. The art movements of ancient Egypt and ancient Babylonia, for instance, were inspired and promoted by the priests, and cannot be understood without reference to the religious systems of those pioneer civilizations. Even battle-scenes had their religious bearing, for victory was given by the gods. The arts of lesser peoples may not, as are those of Egypt and Babylonia, be rendered articulate in varying degrees by surviving texts, but there are many myths and customs which of themselves, or when viewed in the light of comparative evidence, provide data to emphasize that what some call an "art motif" was, after all, really a "luck motif" (a magico-religious symbol), and, further, that we are not justified in insisting on the "Art for Art's sake" theory even when no direct evidence is available to show whether or not the simplest design had originally a meaning. Two short horizontal lines on the forehead of a Chinese tiger in jade were sufficient to indicate, to the ancient Chinese, that the animal was the divinity of the West. If that were not known, the lines in question would, no doubt, be referred to by some as "ornamental". After all, the Christian cross is a very "simple" design. Yet it means much to Christians.

When we undertake the investigation of the various customs and the associated beliefs of "early man", we find that, as Professor Breasted so finely says in connexion with the Pyramid Texts of ancient Egypt, "they vaguely disclose to us a vanished world of thought and speech". It is difficult to believe that early man, whose burial customs were expressions of his beliefs regarding human destiny, and whose other customs were similarly invested with meaning, produced art objects and designs which were entirely meaningless to him, especially when we find that he considered it necessary to place them beside, or upon, the dead. It is, further, difficult to believe, in the light of such evidence as is available, that a few "art motifs" were repeated for long centuries, and disseminated over wide areas, simply because early man's æsthetic sense hungered for expression. If the æsthetic sense really made so insistent and inevitable an appeal, why, it may be asked, did it ignore many forms of natural beauty, and remain content instead to draw constant refreshment from an exceedingly limited stock of sterile and arbitrary designs?

Another phase of the problem emerges when we find the same or similar designs in various parts of the world, either as archaeological relics of high civilizations, or still existing among "backward peoples". It is frequently asserted in this connexion that a particular design, which is found to have a definite significance in one part of the world, has, or had not necessarily the same meaning in another. But those who argue in this fashion must be reminded that the whole symbols problem cannot be disposed of by urging a hypothesis based on the isolated or partial evidence afforded by a single symbol. It is necessary, where such is possible, that all the available evidence regarding each individual symbol should be collected and examined; that a symbol should be studied in its chronological aspect irrespective of what particular phase of material culture it may be found to be associated with in recent, or comparatively recent, times; and that records should be made of the variations of form it may have been given in a single area, as well as in widely-separated areas. The simplest forms, as we find in some instances, are not necessarily the oldest forms. Crude Christian crosses, for instance, are to be seen incised in some Scottish caves, but they are not, of course, the oldest cross symbols that have survived; nor do they really of themselves afford any indication as to where Christianity had origin.

Another point to be borne in mind, when dealing with the migration of symbols, is that the religious system which a symbol originally represented may have acquired, after importation into a particular area, some degree of "local colour". The Christian cross worn as a talisman by a half-converted African native, does not mean to him all that it means to a cultured European or American theologian. Indeed, the cross may mean much to the native regarding which the American or European theologian knows little or nothing and, perhaps, cares less. Thus the same particular symbol, representing a definite religious system, may in our own day, at once mean the same thing and different things in separate areas. No doubt, in ancient times, an imported element of culture, represented by a particular symbol, was often similarly blended with the elements of a local religious system, with the result that the symbol is found to have acquired a wider or more complex significance than it possessed in the area of origin. At the same time, the symbol in question may have always retained a degree of its fundamental meaning.

The matter is really one for investigation. No single rule can be applied in connexion with the symbols problem as a whole. Although in some areas a symbol may have acquired new meanings, or vague secondary meanings, certain far-carried symbols, as is shown in this volume, have retained much of their original significance in different parts of the world.

*Symbols like the spiral and swastika can be traced either to their periods or areas of origin. The first mentioned is undoubtedly of greatest antiquity. Its introduction and diffusion in Palæolithic times appears to have been directly due to the magico-religious use of whorled shells. The Greek and Latin word *hēlix*, applied to the snail-shell, to coiled wire, to the external part of the ear and to a species of ivy which grows in spiral form, and the Latin word *hēlicē*, which signified "a winding", and was also applied to the "Great Bear" (*Ursa major*) constellation, emphasize of themselves how complex the inherited and widely-diffused spiral symbolism formerly was. Indeed, the spiral, as the evidence reviewed in this volume serves to indicate, played a prominent and even a fundamental part in certain ancient religious systems. It brought about arbitrary associations. Climbing plants, which grow in spiral form, were connected with whorled shells, with the octopus which curves its tentacles, with the coiling serpent, with whirlwinds, with whirlpools, and with waterspouts. The spiral gusts or whirlwinds were "carriers" of gods and other supernatural beings, because they were "life-givers" which caused the birth of the year, and therefore ensured the food supply and promoted health, longevity, etc. Dragons and "makaras" were likewise "carriers" of gods, and of kings ("sons of the sun"), and of ghosts, because they were products and expressions of a group of complex beliefs similar to that symbolized by the whirlwind spiral. But the dragon and "makara" were not merely complex manifestations of the group of ideas connected with the "air of life"—the whirlwind. The dragon was a "thunderer". In Asia the thunder god, in human, animal or reptile form, caused the "birth" of the year by bringing fertilizing and nourishing rain. He was, however, closely associated with the wind god, or a group of wind gods, as was, for instance, the Hindu Indra with Vayu, and also with Rudra, and with the Rudras and Maruts. The spiral, as a "life-giver", was thus a symbol of the thunder-god, as well as of the whirlwind*

god. Both in China and Japan, as is shown, the spiral was at once the "thunder roll" and the "dragon-roll" (the whirlwind). It symbolized the energy of which the god was a manifestation, and it symbolized the outstanding attributes of that life-giving, food-producing god. The dragon's life-giving, health-promoting pearl was, we are informed, an "ascending spiral", which had been spit out by the ascending, active dragon; a "flat spiral" was the dragon itself (in repose). Whirlpools were caused by dragons and dragons lived in whirlpools. The Chinese texts are quite explicit in these connexions. China acquired much from India, and, like India, from Iran, which was heavily indebted to Babylonia.

As the dragon-god had an intimate connexion with the elements, he was logically connected with the heavenly bodies which appeared, to early scientists with limited knowledge, to control the elements and the seasons; and, in China, we find the spiral as a symbol of the sun and moon and intimately associated with the "Great Bear" (Ursa Major) constellation, the ancient Chinese "chariot" of the chief god of the Universe. Like the whirlwind and the "makara", this stellar "chariot" was a "carrier" of a deity. At the same time it was a "hēlicē" (Gr. ἑλική).

The spiral theory may be said, indeed, to have haunted the minds of the early scientists and philosophers, until Epicurus rejected the "Vortex of atoms" favoured by the great Democritus. But, the scientists of to-day do not ridicule that theory, as did certain classical writers, for discovery has been made of "spiral nebulae". Neither Democritus, nor his "master" Leucippus, however, possessed any exceptional or exclusive astronomical knowledge to justify their Vortex theory, which was really rooted in ancient spiral symbolism—in inherited lore regarding Celestial whirlwinds and whirlpools, and the whirlwind-whirlpool lore was originally connected with whorled-shell symbolism. An interesting poetic survival of shell symbolism is Dante's spiral-shaped Inferno—a "shell cave", a "wind hole", with a history rooted in Palæolithic times.

The swastika, which was associated with the spiral in many areas, appears, as is shown, to have been introduced some time after the discovery of agriculture and the fixing of the cardinal points. Its development from the equal-limbed cross of the early mariners, including those who settled in Crete, apparently took place when it was observed that the revolving "Great Bear" constellation indicates the seasons, pointing, with its "tail",

eastward in spring, southward in summer, westward in autumn and northward in winter.

As a cross of the cardinal points, the swastika appears to have been originally a symbol of the world under the guardianship and control of the season-ruling gods of the four cardinal points. It still, as is shown, retains that significance among Asian Moslems, the gods having been supplanted by angels. After the swastika was, like the simpler cross, the four horns, the four pillars, etc., taken over by the solar cult, it became in certain areas mainly a symbol of divinity, and as such was used, as were some other symbols, to emphasise in its own particular bearing, the sacred character and the attributes of certain images and cult animals. We find that the swastika was used at Troy sometimes as a symbol of the four gods of the cardinal points, sometimes as a symbol of one of these gods, and sometimes as a symbol of the sun as ruler of all the gods. Not the least interesting of the surviving swastika symbols is the Navaho (Red Indian) "whirling logs"—an equal-limbed cross, with gods perched on each point, giving it a swastika form (see frontispiece). This cross is kept revolving in a "whirlpool lake" which is situated in the north—the north of the sky. The spiral and swastika were apparently definitely connected with the revolving "Great Bear" (Ursa Major) constellation in the New World as in the Old.

The "ear symbols", as is shown, link with the spiral, as the spiral links with the swastika. Their most intimate connexions, however, are with the whorled shell and the sun. One of the by-products of the arbitrary association of the ear-helix and the sun, is the fantastic idea of birth from the ear. Originally the shell was a symbol of birth, being a birth-assisting amulet. That may be why the spiral became a symbol of the birth of the year, and why importance was attached to whirlpools and whirlwinds regarding which much suggestive lore is provided in this volume. The murmuring shell was apparently supposed to give birth to wind—the whirlwind—and to be connected with water, and especially the life-giving whirlpool. Life, it was conceived, began to be in a whirlpool on the waste of waters which covered the entire universe before

the heavens and earth

Rose out of Chaos.

The first whirlwind was the cause of the first whirlpool, or "water

spout. It was the "air of life"—the breath of the creative "word". The "ear" (helix) of Chaos heard the "word" and received the breath—the "word" and "breath" being one. That was evidently why the ancient Egyptians believed that the "air of life" enters the right ear and "the air of death" the left ear; but that strange concept could not have possibly emerged until after "right" and "left" had assumed a definite significance in connexion with the cardinal points. Thus, as is found, the symbolism of the whorled murmuring shell—the first natural spiral which attracted early man's attention—became exceedingly complex and profound in the course of time, and even before Democritus connected the whirlwind spiral with the Atomic theory.

The ear symbols were not products of "savagery"; they appear rather to be relics of the doctrines formulated by the thinkers and teachers of early civilization. In ancient, as in modern times, the few taught, the many were instructed; the few thought, the many believed; the few led, the many followed; progressive peoples developed ideas and "backward" peoples acquired them.

The tree symbols, when considered in connexion with texts, folk-beliefs, customs, etc., are found to be less a mystery than used to be thought, and more the result of intelligent observation and speculation than of the influence of "natural laws" supposed by some to govern the "workings" of the human mind, so as to produce similar groups of complex ideas at similar stages of mental development at different periods and in different parts of the world. Owing to the persistence and cultural influence of spiral symbolism, as developed in centres of civilization, "twisted trees" and those plants that during growth climb supports in spiral fashion, became sacred to agriculturists and horticulturists. The arbitrary association of sacred, milk-yielding cult animals with sacred trees, was effected after it had been found that the fig and other trees yield a milk-like fluid. Evidence is provided in this connexion to show why the sacred milk-yielding tree was ultimately placed in the Paradise of the "sky world". Trees that, like the vine, yield a watery fluid—"water of life"—were likewise invested with sanctity, and so were "fire-yielding" trees, the twigs of which were used to produce what is referred to in Gaelic as "friction fire".

Throughout this volume I have given selections from the available evidence so as to assist students to solve some of the

problems which arise. It will be found that the so-called "simple symbols", like the swastika and spiral, do not, even among "backward peoples", express merely "simple ideas" connected with ordinary, everyday experiences, but rather highly complex beliefs, which have a history, and appear to have been acquired from ancient centres of civilization. The view that the Polynesian, who tattooed a spiral on his face, was moved to do so in response to the appeal of his æsthetic sense, is one which is exceedingly difficult to accept. There must have surely been a fundamental psychological motive for this deliberate act of facial disfigurement. We seem to meet with that motive when we find that a Polynesian of the "sky cult" believed, as did the Polynesian of the Underworld cult, that after death a goddess examined and picked off tattoo marks. The Polynesian who favoured the spiral symbol ascended to the "sky world" on a whirlwind. But before ascending to the sky, the Polynesian ghost had to travel to the homeland of his race, which was supposed to be situated in the centre (navel) of the world. The Polynesian of the Underworld cult went in the same direction, but, in accordance with the tattoo scheme of his cult, he descended to his own particular Underworld paradise. It is apparent, therefore, that the complex beliefs of Polynesia cannot be accurately designated as "primitive". Much appears to have been inherited from the ancient civilizations with which the ancestors of the sea-faring Polynesians were originally in direct touch. It may not, therefore be, after all, merely a coincidence that the banyan tree is sacred in Polynesia as in India. The banyan was imported by man into Polynesia, as was the Indonesian coco-nut into India on the one hand and into pre-Columbian America on the other.

Those anthropologists who reject the diffusion theory favour the theory of the independent origin of similar groups of complexes in different parts of the world, and insist on the essential "psychic unity" of all mankind. The reader must decide, after patient investigation, whether we really possess sufficient knowledge of "the workings" of the human mind to justify acceptance of this rival theory. That the evidence regarding the symbols dealt with in this volume will assist students to consider the theories of Diffusion and Independent Origin, the writer is not only hopeful but firmly convinced.

DONALD A. MACKENZIE.

THE MIGRATION OF SYMBOLS AND THEIR RELATIONS TO BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

CHAPTER I

THE SWASTIKA

SECTION I

THE AREA OF ORIGIN

Swastika as a "luck symbol"—Meaning of "luck"—Various readings of symbol—Problem of Distribution—Not found in Ancient Egypt or Ancient Mesopotamia—Late introduction into Africa—Hittite and Phrygian swastikas—Found in Cyprus and Troy—On early Elamite pottery—Swastika as a Christian cross—As a Celtic goddess symbol—Survivals in modern Europe—Aryan origin theory—Migrations of swastika—Egyptian "Winged Disc" and swastika—Distribution of swastika in America—The Octopus and swastika.

NO symbol has of recent years aroused more interest among students of antiquities in both hemispheres than that which by general consent is referred to by its ancient Sanskrit name of swastika—formerly spelled "suastika" and "svastica", or "svastika". This word is in both its ancient and modern sense roughly the equivalent of "good luck" in a religious or magico-religious connexion. The meaning of "luck" is somewhat vague in our day. It is something we half believe in even against our better judgment—something distantly related to faith and the conception of destiny, but, when closely examined, found to be disreputable and more akin to gross superstition, and, therefore, manifestly a survival of pagan modes of thought. To our ancestors whose religious and magico-religious concepts still linger tardily in folk customs and beliefs, perpetuated by some quite seriously, and by others with half-amused tolerance, luck stood for nearly everything

mankind desired in this world and the next—health, wealth, prosperity, protection, love, friendship, pleasure, happiness, long life, success in all undertakings, etc.

Various theories have been advanced from time to time to explain the swastika as a pagan symbol, and archæologists and others have devoted attention to the problem of discovering its area of origin, while some incline to the view that it appeared spontaneously in different parts of the world. It has been referred to as a phallic symbol, a symbol of the female principle, a symbol of conception and birth, an ancient trade mark, a mere ornament, a symbol of fire, a symbol of lightning, a thunderbolt, a symbol of water, an astronomical symbol, a symbol of the four castes of India, a religious or military standard or flag, a bird in flight, a representation of the argonaut or octopus, a cross (as in the French terms “*croix gammée*” and “*gammadion*”—the cross of four “*gammas*”) as a “*fyflot*” (a Teutonic compound meaning “many footed”) etc. The various forms of the swastika shown on Plate I have been selected from widely separated areas, but several of the different specimens may be found in a single area and even on a single artifact, sometimes in association with other symbols.

The swastika is of considerable antiquity in Elam (south-western Persia), in Asia Minor, and in the Ægean and Danubian “culture areas” of the archæologists. It appeared comparatively early in Central, Western and Northern Europe, as well as in India, where it became an auspicious and greatly favoured symbol among the Buddhists, Jains and worshippers of Vishnu; in China and Japan it was similarly favoured; while it was widely distributed in pre-Columbian America. There is, however, no trace of the swastika proper in Egypt during either pre-dynastic or dynastic times. It was introduced into that country a few centuries before the Christian era, and it reached Algeria, Ashantee, etc. somewhat later. Neither the Sumerians nor Babylonians made use of it in lower Mesopotamia. Nor did it appeal to the Assyrians in the North. Professor Sayce wrote regarding it in 1888¹:

The dresses of cloth and linen with which the Hittites clothed themselves were dyed with various colours, and were

¹ *The Hittites: The Story of a Forgotten Empire*. London. p. 142.

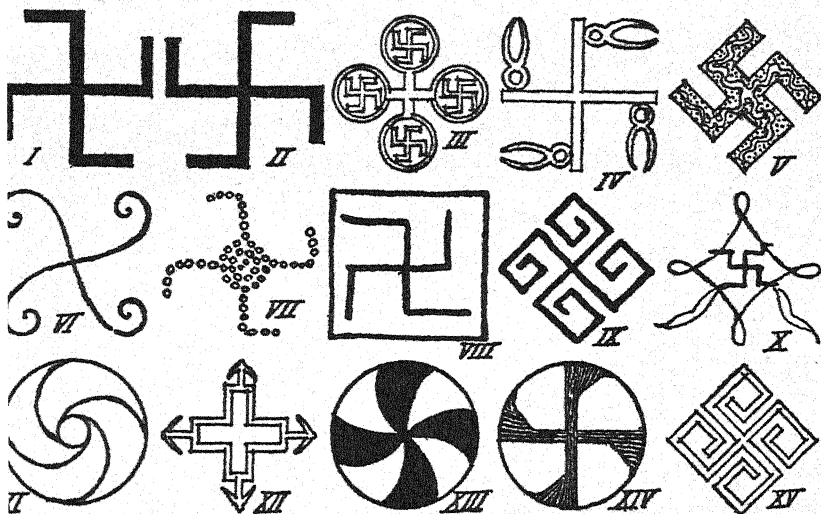
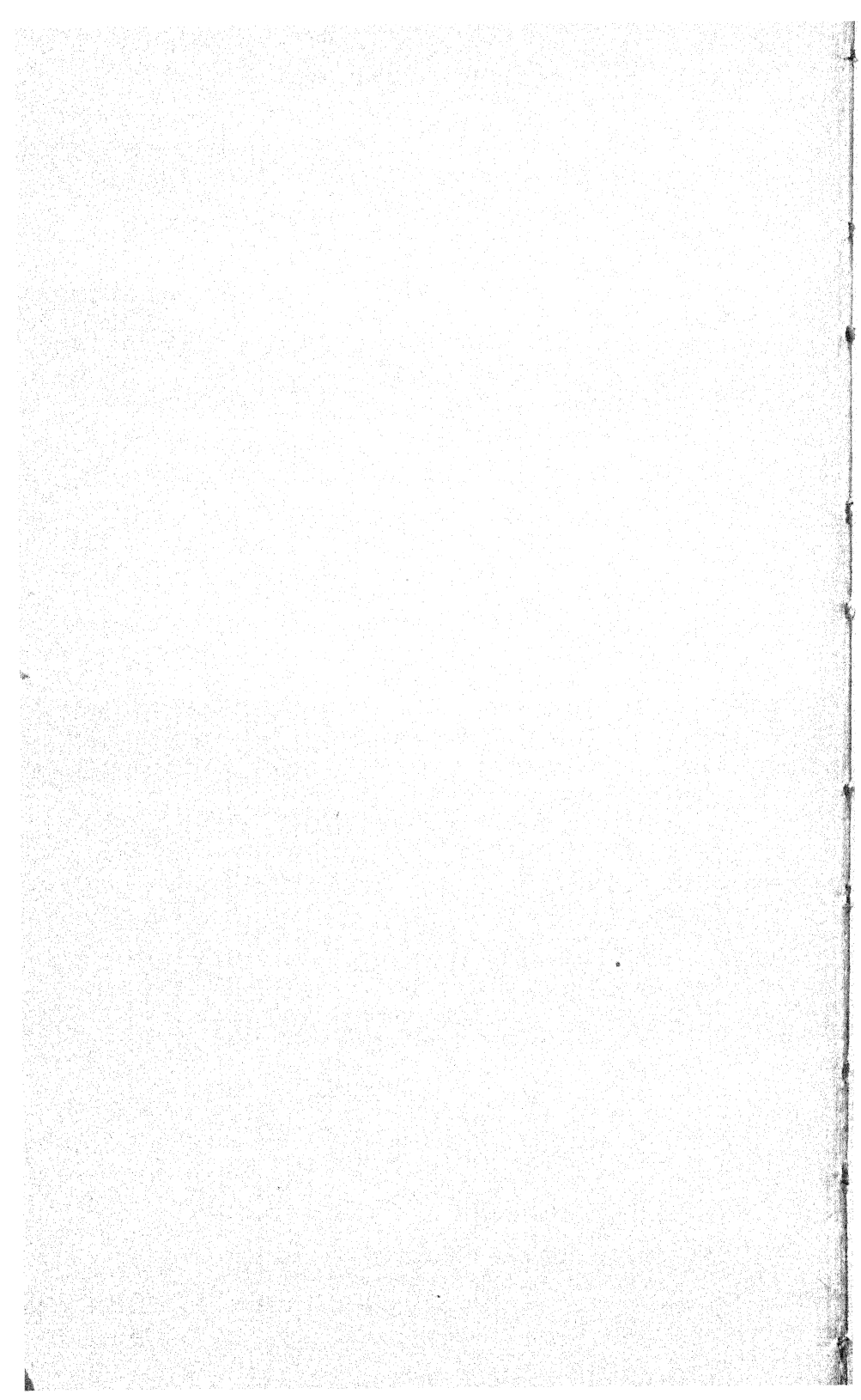


PLATE I

SWASTIKA SYMBOLS

- I and II Left-hand and right-hand swastikas ;
- III and IV, from India ;
- V from necropolis of Koban, Caucasus ;
- VI Circassian brand for horses and on Greek vases ;
- VII from bronze pin-head, Caucasus ;
- VIII widespread form in Old and New Worlds ;
- IX from Asia Minor and Greek vases ;
- X from China ;
- XI from North American shell disc (after T. Wilson) ;
- XII from Ancient Hindu coin ;
- XIII North American Indian (after T. Wilson) ;
- XIV North American Indian (after T. Wilson) ;
- XV from Greek vases.



ornamented with fringes and rich designs. That of the priest of Ibreez is especially worthy of study. Among the patterns with which it is adorned are the same square ornament as is met with on the tomb of the Phrygian King Midas, and the curious symbol usually known as the "swastika", which has become so famous since the excavations of General di Cesnolla in Cyprus, and of Dr. Schliemann at Troy. The symbol recurs times without number on the pre-historic pottery of Cyprus and the Trojan plain; but no trace of it has ever yet been found in Egypt, in Assyria, or in Babylonia. Alone among the remains of the civilized nations of the ancient East the rock sculpture of Ibreez displays it on the robe of a Lykaonian priest. Was it an invention of the Hittite people, communicated by them to the rude tribes of Asia Minor, along with the other elements of a cultured life, or was it of barbarous origin, adopted by the Hittites from the earlier population of the West?

About a quarter of a century after these words were written, Edmund Pottier found the swastika on a painted vase at Susa, which he regards as proto-Elamite of the earliest period.¹

Although essentially a Pagan symbol, the swastika was adopted, with other pre-Christian symbols, by the early Christians, and freely used by them in the catacombs at Rome. Forms of it are associated with Christian symbols in Irish manuscripts and on the sculptured stones of Scotland, but both in Ireland and Scotland it was known in pre-Christian times, and had evidently as elsewhere, a religious or magico-religious significance. Its use in Europe generally has long since died out, except where it is favoured for business purposes or in art, but in Ireland and the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland a form of it is still being woven in straw at harvest time, or in rushes in spring, and associated with St. Bride, a famous lady who was the first nun in Ireland but whose memory has been confused with that of the old Pagan goddess Bride or Brigit, the mother goddess of the ancient Celtic tribe of the Brigantes.

Martin, in his *Western Isles*,² tells that on "Bride's day" (February 1st, old style),

The mistress and servants of each family take a sheaf of oats and dress it up in woman's apparel, put it in a large

¹ *Memoires de la Délégation en Persee*, T. XIII, *Rech. Archéol.*, 5^e serie, 1912, Plate XLI, Fig. 3.

² 1716, p. 119.

basket, and lay a wooden club by it, and this they call Briid's Bed; and then the mistress and servants cry three times, "Briid is come, Briid is welcome".

Campbell of Tiree records the survival of this ceremony in the nineteenth century. He was informed:

On St. Bride's Day a bed of birch twigs was made by the women, and that they then cried at the door, "Bride, Bride come in, your bed is ready".¹

The "Bride baby" is still, in some parts of Ireland and Scotland, the "Harvest baby", and made in forms similar to figure 1, which is an exact copy of one used a few years ago. This survival into our own generation of an ancient symbol connected with the agricultural mode of life, is of very special interest.

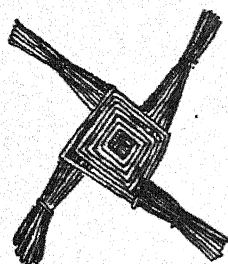


FIG. 1.
"BRIDE BABY"

Elsewhere in Europe the modern use of the swastika appears to be confined to Iceland, Lapland and Finland. According to Dr. Haddon, Cambridge, who cites as his authorities Karl Blind and J. A. Hjaltalin, the swastika was

regarded until recently in Iceland as a "magic sign, but with an obscured or corrupted meaning."²

In his scholarly monograph on the swastika,³ Mr. Thomas Wilson refers to the use of the swastika on modern household and domestic utensils from Lapland. Figure 2, which is from a churn, has been referred to as a "thunderbolt", but it is manifestly in the first place a symbol of the four cardinal

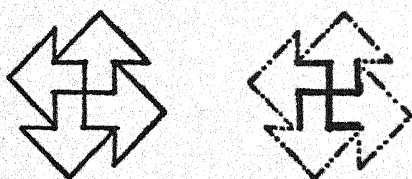


FIG. 2. "LAPLAND SWASTIKA"

points. The arrow-head projections suggest a connexion with thunder and rain. It should be compared with the so-called "Celtic Knot" similarly formed from the swastika,

¹ *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Scottish Highlands*. Glasgow and London, 1902, p. 248.

² A. C. Haddon, *Evolution in Art*. London, 1895.

³ *Annual Report of Smithsonian Institute*, Washington, 1896, pp. 955, 6.

the points, however, being connected with curved instead of straight lines (figure 3).

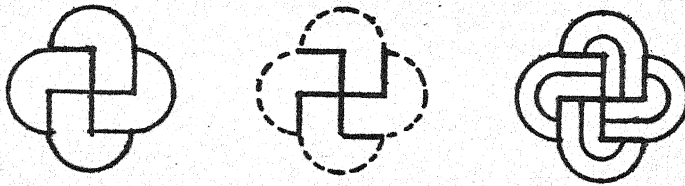


FIG. 3. "CELTIC KNOT" SWASTIKA

In India, the swastika is a living symbol, and retains a haunting sanctity and auspiciousness. It is supposed to assist birth, like the spiral which is dealt with in this connexion in the next chapter. The Buddhists, as stated, took over the swastika, and it is a prominent symbol on the famous footprints of Buddha (figure 4), where it is associated with other symbols. It still survives in Tibet (figure 5). The Moslems perpetuate its use. An Indian Jain form of the swastika may here be

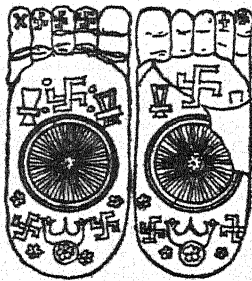


FIG. 4.
BUDDHA FOOTPRINTS

given (figure 6). The curved limbs, like the Tibetan form, suggest a lunar connexion.

A theory which found favour for a time was that the swastika had origin in the "Iranian homeland" of our "Aryan forefathers." Dr. Schliemann¹ drew attention to the interesting fact that the

equal-limbed cross with central circle (Plate IV, fig. 39), common to Troy and India, was also a swastika to the Sanskrit-speaking Aryan-Indians, and he expressed his conviction that both the cross and swastika were "religious symbols of the very greatest importance among the early progenitors of the Aryan races in Bactria and in the villages of the Oxus, at a time when Germans, Indians, Pelasgians, Celts, Persians,



FIG. 5.
TIBETAN
SWASTIKA



FIG. 6.
JAIN SWASTIKA

¹ *Troy and Its Remains*. Translation edited by P. Smith. London, 1875, pp. 101 et seq.

8 THE MIGRATION OF SYMBOLS

Slavonians and Iranians still formed one nation and spoke one language”.

Count Goblet D'Alviella¹ writes in this connexion :

A first observation, made long ago, is that the *gammadion* is almost the exclusive property of the Aryan race. It is found, in fact, among all the peoples of the Indo-European branch, whilst it is completely absent among the Egyptians, the Chaldæans, the Assyrians, and even the Phœnicians, although these latter were not very scrupulous in borrowing the ornaments and symbols of their neighbours. As for the Tibetans, the Chinese and the Japanese, amongst whom it is neither less frequent nor less venerated, it is not difficult to prove that it must have come to them, with Buddhism, from India . . .

In the extreme East, the origin of the *gammadion* can be traced without difficulty to the swastika of India (*Ibid.* p. 79.)

The Count is of opinion that “neither the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Phœnicians, nor even the Egyptians” could have “imparted the *gammadion* to Hindustan. There only remain, then, the Persians. . . . But in Persia itself the *gammadion* only appears as an exception. . . . Perhaps”, he suggests, “we would do well to look towards the Caucasus, where the antique ornaments with *gammadions*, collected by M. Chantre, leads us back to a civilization closely enough allied, by its industrial and decorative types, to that of Mycenæ”.

The Count gives a table illustrating the migrations of the swastika in which it is traced from Troy eastward to India, China and Japan, and westward to Gaul, where it was earlier than in Germania, Scandinavia and the British Isles. Many centuries before the migrations took place it passed into Greece but it reached Etruria before it appeared in Thrace and Macedonia.

The Count then writes :

If the *gammadion* is found amongst none of the nations composing the Egypto-Semitic group, if, amongst the Aryan of Persia, it never played but a secondary and obliterated part, might it not be because the art and symbolism of the different nations possess other figures which discharge a similar function, whether as a phylactery, or else as an astronomical, or a divine symbol ? The real talismanic cross of the

¹ *The Migration of Symbols*, translation by Sir George Birdwood, London, 1894, pp. 73 et seq.

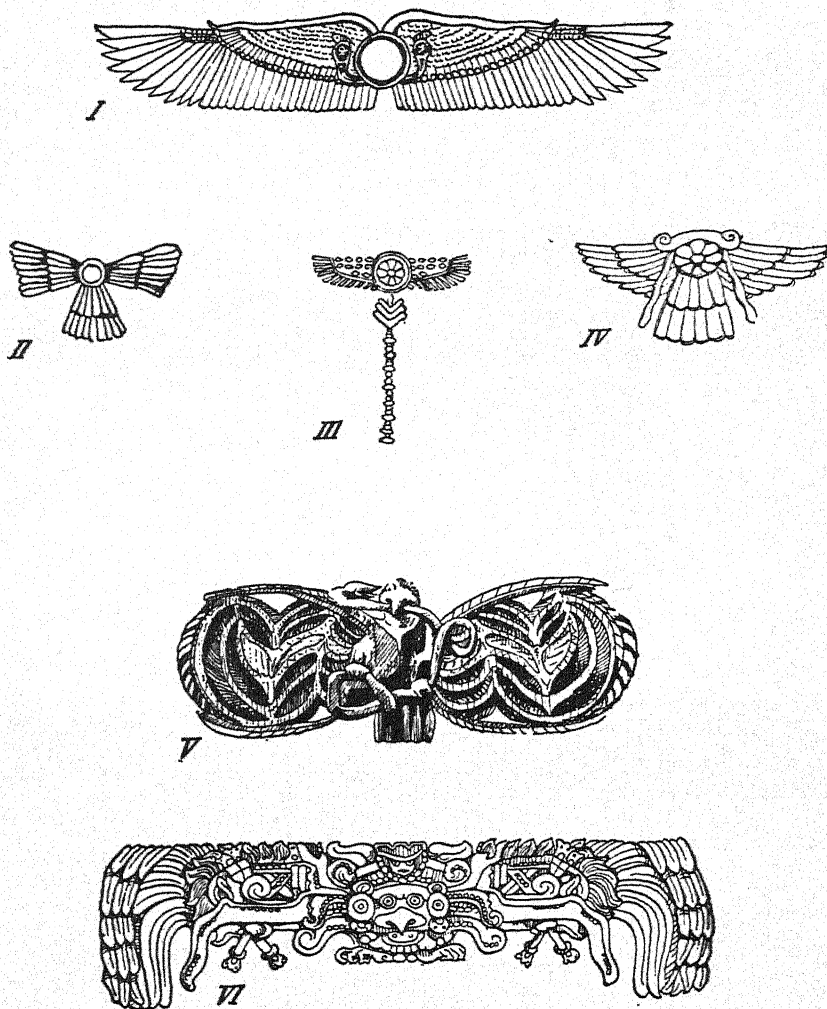
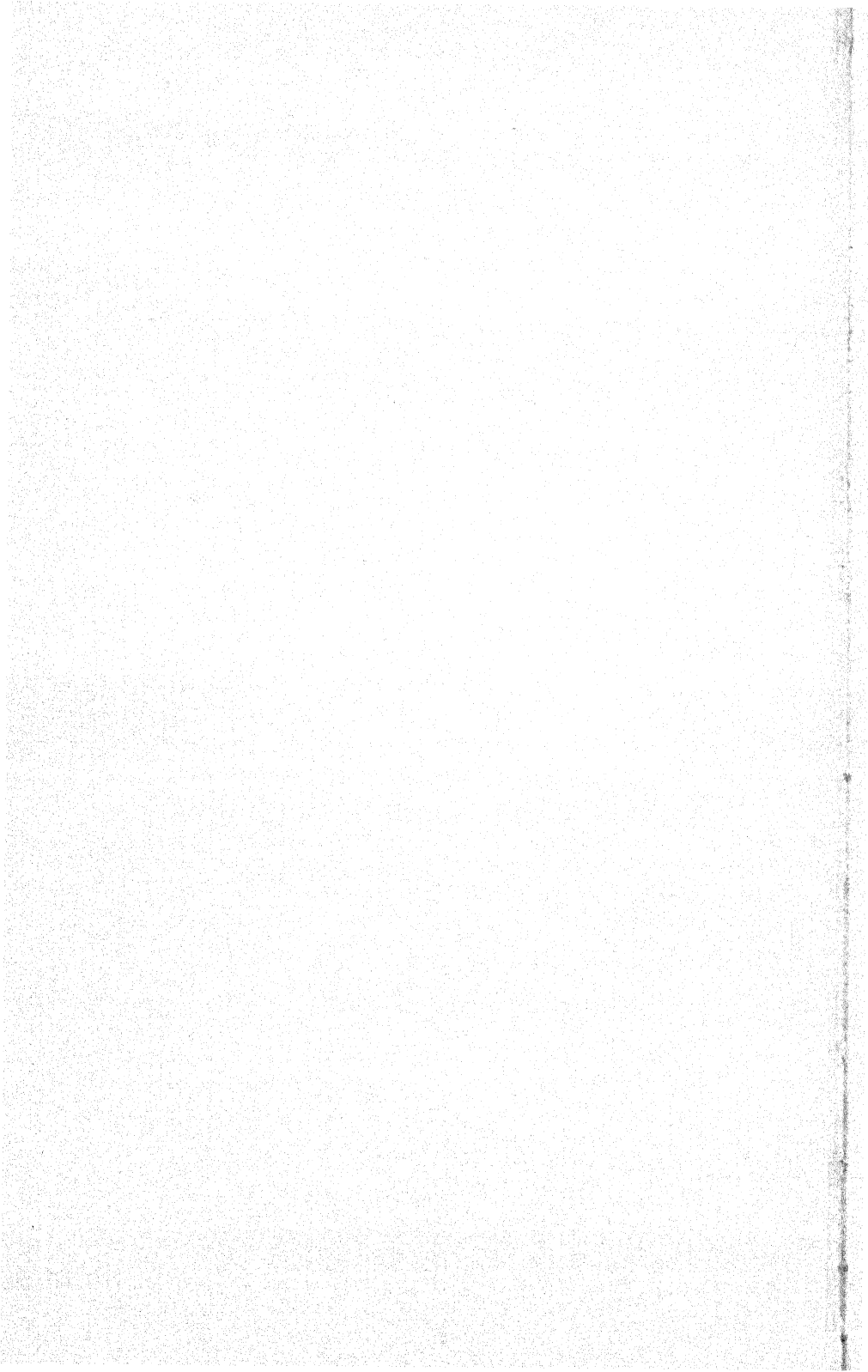


PLATE II

THE WINGED DISK

- I Egyptian winged disc; the globe is "in front" and the wings north and south with serpent deities of Upper and Lower Egypt. It is thus a cross of the cardinal points.
- II Assyrian form.
- III Syro-Hittite form.
- IV Babylonian form.
- V Polynesian form (in wood).
- VI Pre-Columbian Mexican form.



countries stretching from Persia to Libya is the *crux ansata*, the Key of Life of the Egyptian monuments. As for their principal symbol of the sun in motion, is it not the Winged Circle? . . . There would seem to be between these figures and the *gammadion*, I will not say a natural antipathy, but a repetition of the same idea. Where the *gammadion* predominates, that is to say, in the whole Aryan world, except Persia—the Winged Circle and the *crux ansata* have never succeeded in establishing themselves in good earnest. . .

In brief, the ancient world might be divided into two zones, characterized, one by the presence of the *gammadion*, the other by that of the Winged Globe as well as of the *crux ansata*; and these two provinces barely penetrate one another at a few points of the frontier, in Cyprus, at Rhodes, in Asia Minor and in Libya. The former belongs to Greek civilization, the latter to Egypto-Babylonian culture.

Into India, where modified forms of the winged disc can be found, the swastika, according to the Count, was introduced from Greece or Asia Minor. Its spread into Mongolia was due to Buddhist influence.

The swastika is found to have been widely distributed in the New World in pre-Columbian times. Mr. Thomas Wilson has traced it among pre-Columbian relics in Tennessee, Ohio and Arkansas; among various Red Indian tribes found perpetuating ancient beliefs and customs in Nicaragua, Yucatan and Costa Rica, Central America; and in Brazil and Paraguay, South America. Mr. Wilson favours the view that it was carried from the Old World to the New, and writes:

The swastika is found in America in such widely separated places, among such different civilizations, as much separated by time as by space, that if we had to depend on the theory of separate inventions to explain its introduction into America we must also depend upon the same theory for its introduction into the widely separated parts of America.

In favouring the migration theory, he says:

The word migration has been used by the author in any sense that permitted the people, or any number thereof, to pass from one country to another country, or from one section of a country to another section of the same country, by any means or in any numbers as they pleased or could.

When we remember how few were the Buddhist missionaries who brought about the conversion to their faith of large masses of the Chinese and other peoples in the Far East, it can be

realised that in pre-Columbian America small intruding minorities may have left an impress on the intellectual life of the peoples of wide areas.

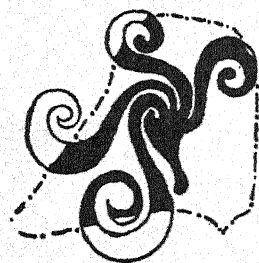


FIG. 7.
MYCENÆAN CONVENTION-
ALIZED OCTOPUS
(after Houssay)

Professor Elliot Smith, who is convinced that the swastika was carried to the New World from the Old, considers that it "was already a rigidly conventionalized symbol when we first know it both in the Mediterranean and in Susiana". He is inclined to favour Houssay's suggestion that it was originally derived from conventionalized representations of the octopus, and writes :

Vincent¹ claims that the fact of the swastika having been in use by ceramic artists in Crete and Susiana many centuries before the appearance of Mycenaean art is fatal to Houssay's hypothesis. But I think it is too soon to make such an assumption. . . . The time is not yet ripe for using such arguments as Vincent's finally to dispose of Houssay's octopus theory.²

¹ *Canaan*, p. 340.

² Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, pp. 173 et seq.

SECTION II

AS THE CROSS OF THE CARDINAL POINTS

Swastika as symbol—The Cross Symbol—Moslem symbol of cardinal points—Early man's discovery of cardinal points—Finger-posts of Hunters—Azilians and the sun—Ofnet cave-burial custom—The Cult of the West—Egyptian reference to Azilian custom—Dismemberment of Osiris—Osiris as "First of the Westerners"—Rival Cult of the East—How Egypt reveals the cardinal points—Egyptian winds and the Inundation—Pre-dynastic burial customs—Sexes connected with North and South—The Northern stars—Pharaoh as the Pole star—Mariners and symbols—Sky-goddess and the cardinal points—Egyptian gods of Four Quarters.

No doubt can remain that in the Old and New Worlds the swastika was a sacred symbol and therefore a "luck bringer". It was one of the several designs which meant something to the ancient peoples who adopted it, as it does to the modern peoples who continue to make use of it in a variety of ways. There may be uncertainty as to the precise area in which it assumed its most characteristic form—whether in Asia Minor, or in the Ægean area—but it does not follow that the swastika did not at first mean anything, and acquired a symbolic value long after it came into existence. From the outset it appears to have expressed an idea, or rather a group of complex ideas. Nor does it follow that these complex ideas had origin in the area in which the swastika first assumed its permanent form as a symbol.

The French names "*croix gammée*", "*croix cramponée*", "*croix pattee*" and "*croix à crochet*" convey the fundamental idea which its form suggests. It is essentially a cross with four symbols added—one at each point. Even the simple equal-limbed cross was a complex symbol, because it represented the four cardinal points, as does an interesting form of the swastika in Moslem works. This Moslem swastika (figure 8) has a guardian angel at each cardinal point—the "Recorder" in the West, "Death" in the South, the "Announcer" in the East and "Life" in the North.

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It must be realized at the outset, in dealing with the equal-limbed cross symbol, that before the early people had discovered the four cardinal points, a considerable advance in civilization

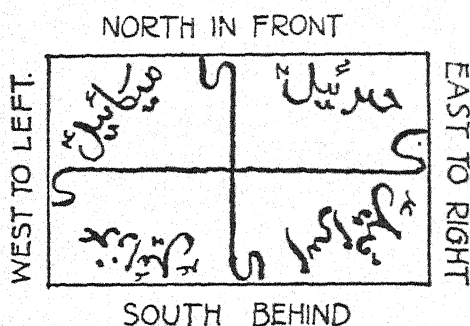


FIG. 8. MOSLEM SWASTIKA

had been effected. The apparent daily course of the sun may have familiarized them with the east and the west—the sunrise point and the sunset point. But in the absence of any hint from nature, especially during the day time, the convenience, and, as it appears to modern minds, the absolute necessity of fixing the points we call North and South, may never have occurred to a people whose movements were controlled mainly by those animals they hunted for food.

The early trackers did not, of course, carry the compass, which had not been invented, and it is unlikely that they hunted much if at all in darkness when beasts of prey were prowling about in larger numbers than in daylight. When they followed the chase and returned to their caves and camps, they were, no doubt, guided by local landmarks, or by such artificial signs as they were accustomed to use. Hunters who still perpetuate primitive habits continue to use “finger posts”. Interesting examples of these, as used by the Abnaki Red Indians of North America are as follows :



FIG. 9. RED INDIAN FINGER-POSTS (after Leo Frobenius)

Figure A is a characteristic guide post to a camp ; figure B is one of temporary character ; figure C indicates both direction and distance, the upright post placed near the end of the branch shows that the distance is not a great one ; while figure D, on the other hand, indicates a considerable distance. Figure E has five upright posts, which indicate the number of days occupied by the journey taken in the direction shown by the long branch.

In deep forests the hunting peoples could not have taken their bearings, or found their way, even although they had knowledge of the cardinal points. They were, however more keenly observant than are modern men, and could follow what in Gaelic stories are called " the deer's path, the rabbit's path and the fox's path ". They were accomplished trackers. But while they were able to detect the traces left by animals, they also made marks to record their own movements. One is reminded in this connexion of the practice referred to in Capt. Marryat's delightful story, *Masterman Ready* (Chapter XIV). Ready and young William undertook to cross the island through a forest, and were soon out of sight of the camp.

" Now, Master William, do you know," said Ready, stopping after they had walked twenty yards, " by what means we may find our way back again ; for you see this forest of trees is rather puzzling, and there is no path to guide us ? "

" No, I am sure I cannot tell : I was thinking of the very same thing when you spoke ; and of Tom Thumb who strewed peas to find his way back, but could not do it, because the birds picked them all up."

" Well, Tom Thumb did not manage well, and we must try to do better ; we must do as the Americans always do in their woods, we must blaze the trees."

" Blaze them ! what, set fire to them ? " replied William.

" No, no, Master William. *Blaze* is a term they use (why, I know not except that there must be a term for everything) when they cut a slice of the bark off the trunk of a tree, just with one blow of a sharp axe, as a mark to find their way back again. They do not blaze every tree, but about every tenth tree as they go along, first one to the right and then one to the left, which is quite sufficient ; and it is very little trouble—they do it as they walk along without stopping . . . "

The need for fixing the cardinal points may have been less pressing among ancient hunters than some modern theorists are inclined to suppose. It is unlikely that the hunters took

as much interest in the stars, and even in the sun and moon, as did the early agriculturists. But that they did take some interest in the sun is suggested by several of the Azilian pictographs of Western Europe.

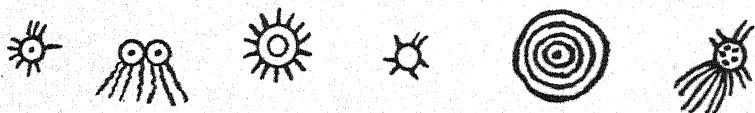


FIG. 10. AZILIAN PICTOGRAPHS (after Breuil)

Further evidence in this connection is afforded by the remarkable Azilian burial custom in the cave of Ofnet, Bavaria. There a mixed people—"long heads" of Mediterranean racial type and "broad heads" from Asia Minor—cut off the heads of their dead, and having smeared them with red earth and "decorated" them with shell amulets, placed them facing the west.

Earlier cave burials in Western Europe, from Aurignacian to Magdalenian times, convey no suggestion of interest in, or knowledge of the cardinal points. The dead were usually deposited with their faces towards the mouth of a cave, as if the belief obtained that the "sleeper", vitalized by red earth and by amulets, would, after many days, awaken and come forth again. Ofnet cave entrance opens from the south-west. The heads facing the west may have been directed towards the spirit land—the Otherworld in the region of the setting sun. It is evident that a people who dismembered their dead did not expect them to awaken in the flesh and return to their former haunts.

It is possible that the ancient Egyptians were in touch at some remote period with a people who similarly dismembered their dead. A chapter in the "Book of the Dead" ends with these words :

I am, I am, I live, I live, I grow, I grow, and when I shall awake in peace, I shall not be destroyed in my bandages. I shall be free of pestilence, my eye will not be corrupted, my skin will not disappear. My ear will not be deaf, *my head will not be taken away from my neck*, my tongue will not be torn out, my hair will not be cut off, my eyebrows will not be shaven off. No grievous harm shall come upon me, my body is firm, it shall not be destroyed. It shall not perish in this earth forever.¹

¹ Edouard Naville, *The Old Egyptian Faith* (translation by C. Campbell. London, 1909, p. 60).

The story of the dismemberment of Osiris may have originally been connected with an ancient burial custom similar to that which archæologists have detected in the cave of Ofnet.

Professor Breasted, dealing with traces in the Pyramid Texts of pre-dynastic Egyptian belief regarding the destiny of the dead, writes as follows :

The oldest (belief) doubtless is contained in that designation of the dead which claims ignorance as to their whereabouts and calls them "those whose places are hidden". Another ancient belief conceives the dead as somewhere in the distant "west" but this belief plays practically no part in the Pyramid Texts, and is discernible there only in an archaic title of the mortuary Anubis of Siut, who occasionally has appended to his name the words "First or Lord of the Westerners", a designation which served as the name of an old mortuary god at Abydos, who was later identified with Osiris. . . .

The cult of the West, however, was certainly in existence. Probably it was a very influential cult among the masses, but it was opposed by the royal solar cult of the East with which the Pyramid Texts are found to be mainly concerned. Breasted notes in this connexion :

In one passage . . . the dead is adjured to go to the West in preference to the East, in order to join the Sun-god, but in this very passage he appears as one whose function was in the East. An analogous passage affirms : King Unis dawns anew in the East. The West is mentioned casually, also along with the other celestial regions where the Sun-god in his course finds the translated Pharaoh. It is the East which with constant reiteration is affirmed to be the most sacred of all regions, and that to which the dead King should face. Indeed, he is explicitly cautioned against the West. "Go not on those currents of the West ; those who go thither, they return not (again)."

In the Pyramid Texts it may be fairly said that the old doctrine of the "West" as the permanent realm of the dead, a doctrine which is later so prominent, has been quite submerged by the pre-eminence of the East.¹

In dealing with the discovery of the four cardinal points, the evidence of Egypt is of very special interest and significance. There Nature not only revealed by the movements of the sun the east and west, but by means of the Nile it forced upon the early agriculturists an interest in the North and South.

¹ *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 100-101.

Although the Nile curves westward below Thebes, and between Assuan and Abu Hammed forms a vast loop, running south-westward, north-westward and then gradually north-eastward, it flows northward in Middle and Lower Egypt. In the art and religious symbolism of the ancient civilization, it was assumed that the course of the Nile was from south to north. "The river (Nile) flows north every day" is a passage in a funerary papyrus.¹

The Pharaoh was the sovereign of the "Two Lands"—Upper or Southern Egypt and Lower or Northern Egypt. There were two Nile gods, named Hapi, one being usually coloured red and the other blue. The Southern Hapi had on his head a cluster of lotus flowers and the Northern Hapi had on his a bunch of papyrus. There was a royal crown of the North and one of the South, and both were combined to signify that the Pharaoh ruled the "Two Lands". One of the

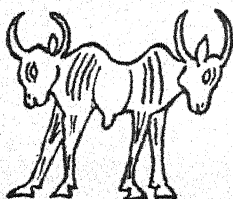


FIG. 11. EGYPTIAN
TWO-HEADED COW

earliest symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt was the double-headed cow, with four horns representing the four cardinal points (figure 11).

The winds that in Egypt blew with the regularity of "trades" also directed attention to the North and South. During the hot season the southerly winds—the blistering *Khamaseen* and dusty whirling *Samoom*—cause the

thermometer to rise so high that even the natives find the heat oppressive and stifling. Welcome relief is afforded when the cool wind from the north—the Etesian wind of the Greeks—begins to blow from the Mediterranean. This north wind was "the air of life" to the ancient Egyptians, who coloured their North red, and it was welcomed on that account as is indicated by many references in the texts. In a funerary papyrus the dead, addressing the nine deities cries out:

"May I proceed upon the course of your lake, may I be the companion of your servants. May I stand up to walk like those who are (alive) on earth. *May I breathe the wind that issues from you, the north wind that issues (from) Nut.* May I imbibe the water whence ye issued, upon the brink of the lake

¹ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. IV, p. 125.

of Horus, that my soul (bai) may be divine, my spirit (*ikh*) beatified."¹

The North wind begins to blow after the hot South winds have coated every green thing with dust. William Osburn writes regarding it :

The first symptom of the termination of this most terrible (hot) season, is the rising of the north wind . . . blowing briskly, often fiercely, during the whole of the day. The foliage of the groves that cover Lower Egypt is soon disencumbered by it of the dust, and resumes its verdure. The fierce fervours of the sun, then at his highest ascension, are also most seasonably mitigated by the same powerful agency, which prevails for this and the three following months throughout the entire land of Egypt.

A change is soon perceptible in the waters of the Nile. The rise of an inch or two is reported from the Nileometer at Cairo . . .

Thus the North wind is the "bringer" of the inundation from the South. It and the Nile were the givers of new life to Egypt.

That the North and South were located at an early period in Egypt is indicated by pre-dynastic pottery on which the equal-limbed cross is to be detected. Further evidence is afforded by pre-dynastic burial customs as the following extract shows :

Well preserved dried-up bodies of the neolithic period are not uncommon in Upper Egypt ; the dead were buried in shallow graves frequently on reed mats, with pottery and flint or other stone implements, lying either on one side or crouched up, or sitting in a squatting posture ; in all cases they face the east. All the male bodies examined by the writer were lying on the right side, and all the females on the left.²

The females, lying on their left sides—on their hearts—thus had their heads directed to the North and their feet to the South, while the males had their heads to the South and their feet to the North. Apparently one of the cardinal points was male and the other female. Connected with this concept may have been the custom referred to in Khafra's tale in one

¹ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. IV, p. 126.

² Robert De Rustafjaell, *The Light of Egypt*. London, 1909, p. 25.

of the old Egyptian collections. The wife of Uba-aner is unfaithful :

And they brought forth the wife of Uba-aner *to the north side of the harem*, and burnt her with fire, and cast her ashes in the river.¹

The Japanese regard the East and South as male and the West and North as female.² In Japanese "medical folklore",

A hiccough is driven away by applying under the knee a sheet of *hanshi*, folded to the left in the case of a man and to the right in the case of a woman.³

In the next chapter it will be shown that the Egyptians were interested in the North not only because the Nile flows in that direction and because it seems to flood in response to the "call" of the North wind, but also because the northern group of stars were to them the "Imperishable Ones". The constant Pole star is in Pyramid Text 464 identified with Pharaoh Pepi of the Sixth Dynasty :

O lofty one among the Imperishable Stars, thou perishest not eternally.⁴

The Egyptians were the earliest mariners. It was on the Nile that the reed-floats were first converted into the boats which were the prototypes of ocean-going vessels. These reed boats were subsequently imitated in wood. Cretan and Phoenician ships were built on Egyptian lines and so, too, were the earliest vessels that sailed on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. More than one expert in boat building and navigation has provided convincing evidence in this connexion.

When the early mariners explored the Syrian and Anatolian coasts and colonized Crete, they carried with them to distant places the elements of early Egyptian culture, including the knowledge of the cardinal points and the use of the equal-limbed cross which Sir Arthur Evans has found to have been a prominent religious object in Crete.

¹ Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales* (First Series). London, 1899, p. 15.

² Article on "Flower Arrangements", by J. Conder in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*. Vol. XVII, pp. 1 *et seq.* (Tokyo, 1889.)

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 28 (Tokyo, 1907).

⁴ Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 92.

In the various colonies and settlements into which the seeds of Egyptian barley and millet were introduced, the agricultural mode of life was adopted, and civilization developed on local lines and took on a local colouring. The imported cross of the cardinal points became a swastika and remained a permanent symbol. In Egypt, which has its own peculiar history of religious thought, the solar cult became prominent and the cross was supplanted by the solar symbol known as the Winged Disc (Plate II). But the cardinal points still retained their importance. The sky goddess Nut was depicted bending over the earth, usually, but not always, with her head to the west and her loins to the east; her arms and legs were the four pillars of the sky. Similarly the legs of the Celestial cow of Nut and Hathor represented the four quarters. The four Horuses of the horizon were guardians of the four quarters, or Osiris or Horus presided over the south, Set over the north, Thoth over the west and Sapdi over the east. At an earlier period, as has been indicated, Osiris was the "first of the Westerners" and Re the god of the East. In the Pyramid Texts, 204-6, Set is King of the South and Horus King of the North.¹ Dr. S. Birch has translated an Egyptian "magical text", which refers to four mansions, each four stories high, situated at Abydos, and gives the explanation:

There are four mansions of life. Osiris is master thereof. The four houses are (named after) Isis, Nephthys, Seb (Geb) and Nu. Isis is placed in one, Nephthys in another, Horus in one, Tahuti (Thoth) in another, at the four angles; Seb (Geb) is above, Nu is below. The four outer walls are of stone. It has two stories, its foundation is sand, its exterior is jasper, one is placed to the South, another to the North, another to the West, another to the East. It is very hidden, unknown, invisible: nothing save the solar disk sees it.²

There is also a reference to a "house" with a door at each cardinal point for Horus, Thoth, Isis and Nephthys respectively.³

Sometimes four goddesses were shown supporting the sky. Nekhebet was goddess of the South, Uatchet of the North,

¹ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

² *Records of the Past*, VI, 113.

³ *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI, p. 123.

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Bast of the East, and Neith of the West.¹ Hathor, like the god Osiris, was identified with the West.

The following symbols show swastika "god houses".

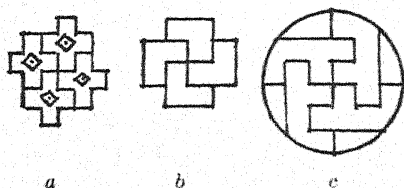


FIG. 12. "GOD HOUSES"

a Zuni (Red Indian) symbol of the four houses of gods ; *b* from Japan :
c from Annam.

¹ Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, p. 438 *et seq.*



PLATE III

SYMBOLS OF SEASONS AND CARDINAL POINTS

All are spindle whorls from Troy (after Schliemann), except the Egyptian scarab with U-form symbols of four quarters.

SECTION III

BELIEFS CONNECTED WITH THE CROSS AND SWASTIKA

Swastika and gods of the cardinal points—Various symbols used like swastika—Various forms of swastika—Importance of cardinal points in ancient religions—Posts or pillars of cardinal points—Nile flowing from sky—Ancient Stellar cult—Egyptian, Chinese, Semitic and Celtic crosses—Mexican concepts—Greek augurs looked North and Latin augurs looked South—Hindu gods of four quarters—North-east and gods—Scandinavian East—Odin looks North—Pyramids and cardinal points—Mesopotamian Ziggurats and cardinal points—Chinese system—Internal Organs connected with cardinal points—More Ancient Burial customs—English, Scottish and Irish Customs and Beliefs connected with cardinal points—Swastika and gold—Gold symbolism.

Light is thrown upon the swastika problem when we examine the Trojan whorls unearthed by Schliemann and note how this particular symbol was used. Plate III shows that it was sometimes a symbol of a god of a cardinal or subsidiary point. Other symbols used in like manner were the "face" symbol, the Y-shaped symbol, the "spear-head" symbol, the "four-leafed" symbol, the triangle symbol, the "double axe" symbol, the "walking animal" symbol, etc. On an Egyptian scarab (the second last figure on Plate III) the U-shaped symbol is used as is the swastika on the next figure, a Trojan whorl. The Egyptian U-shaped symbol apparently represents the double serpent of the "Two Lands"—that is, the serpent-goddess of the South and the serpent-goddess of the North united as one. These serpent-goddesses are found on the Egyptian winged disc (Plate II).

On Plate IV are shown the various symbols that appear on Trojan whorls (figures 1 to 36, with the exception of 19 which is the Egyptian U-formed symbol). Several are found at the cardinal points, as if representing the deities, or certain of their attributes. No. 17 is a four-legged animal; No. 18 a bird; No. 26 is a deer; No. 33 may be a symbol of lightning and therefore of the thunder god; Nos. 28 and 29 are evidently tree symbols; Nos. 22 and 27 are curious variations of the

swastika ; Nos. 36 and 37 are Azilian symbols from Western Europe (after Breuil), and the two rayed rings of 37 may be compared with Nos. 24 and 12 from Troy ; No. 39 is the Hindu cross, also called "swastika", while No. 40 is the Maltese cross, formed of four triangles and apparently of the same significance as the swastika-cross of the four quarters.

In all ancient religions the cardinal points played a prominent part. The early thinkers had formulated definite ideas regarding the world in which they lived long before they began to speculate regarding origins ; and when their minds soared into space, they carried into the Otherworld the familiar objects of everyday life. They did not imagine that the sun was carried across the sky in a boat, like the Egyptian god Re, before boats were invented, or in a chariot, like the Hindu god Surya, before chariots came into use and horses were domesticated. Nor did they regard the heavens as the roof of the world-house which had been fashioned by a divine artisan before they had begun to build houses for themselves. The idea that there was a gate or door in the sky did not have origin until there were gates and doors on the earth.

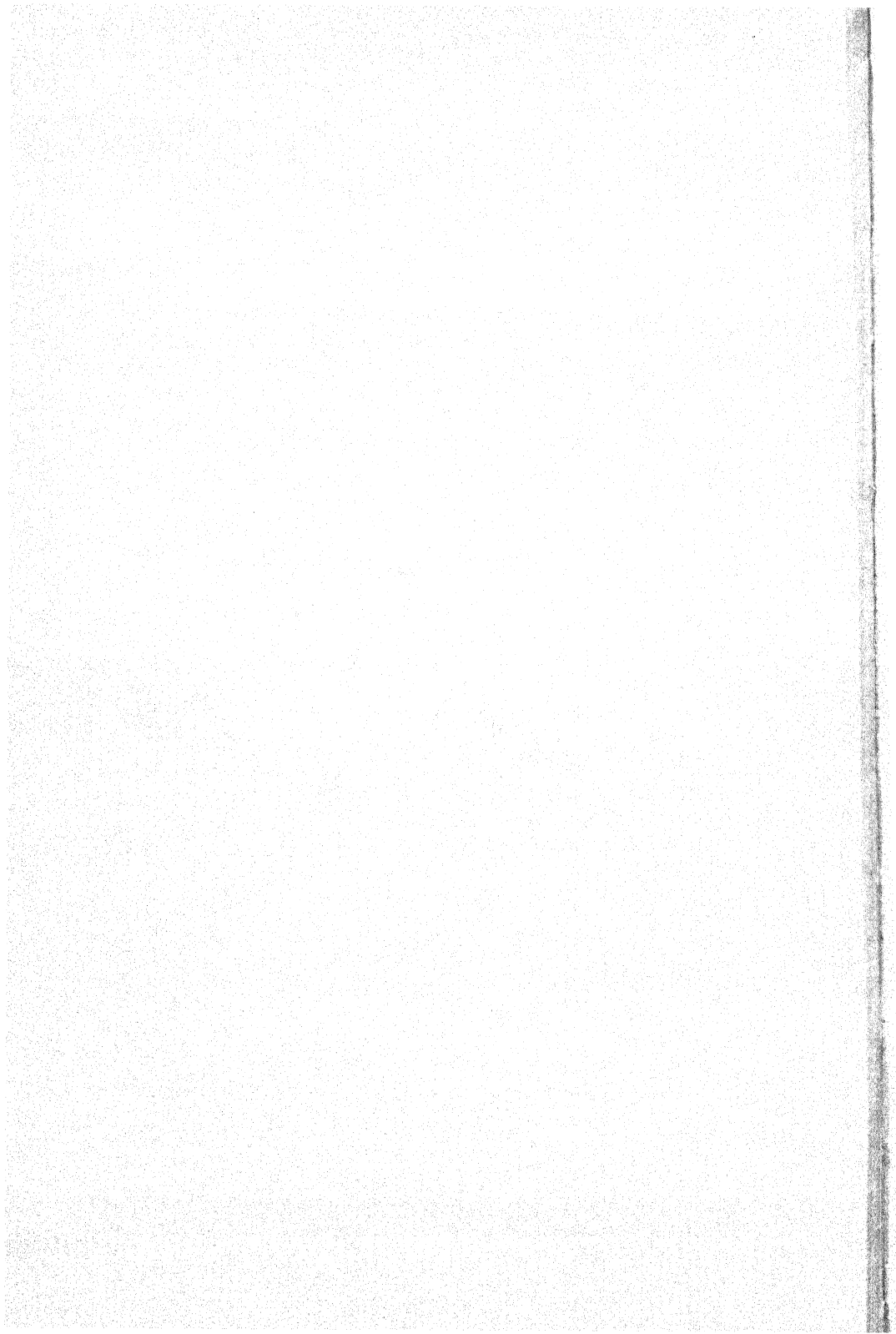
It should not be assumed in this connexion, however, that the "world-tree" of Egyptian, Hindu, Scandinavian and other mythologies was necessarily earlier than the posts or pillars of the cardinal points. The tree did not probably come into prominence before it had been deified and connected with the Celestial cow. Nor was the cow placed in the sky before it had been domesticated and deified and connected with the sky-goddess Nut.

After the early artisans had constructed habitations for themselves, they imagined that the sky roof was supported by posts or pillars. The idea that there was but one pillar may go back to the time when the earliest tents were in use ; the two pillars may have been first suggested by the fact that day has its entrance in the east and exit in the west. The four pillars were not introduced until man had discovered the four cardinal points.

In Egypt, as we have seen, natural phenomena suggested to man the idea that certain influences emanated from the cardinal points. As has been indicated, hot blistering winds blow for a period from the South, and a cool reviving wind blows for a period from the North, heralding and therefore,



PLATE IV
SYMBOLS ON TROJAN WHORLS, ETC.



according to early belief, bringing the inundation which ushers in the season of coolness and fruitfulness. Certain deities were identified with these influences, and they came to be regarded as controllers of them.

The early Egyptians saw Egypt in the sky. The "Milky Way" issuing apparently from the region of the "Imperishable stars" was the Celestial Nile, and the source of their own Nile. It was the river of night. The river of day flowed from east to west, and carried upon its breast the boat of the sun; before it carried this boat, it carried the earlier reed floats which were, according to Pyramid Text 1026, bound together by the "four youths" of the horizon for the sun-god Re and the dead Pharaoh.¹

The deities placed at the four cardinal points were not all equally influential. Those that seemed to favour man most were regarded as stronger and greater than those which gave origin to those influences which caused him to suffer. In the next chapter it will be shown that before the East came into prominence in consequence of the religious and political ascendancy of the solar cult, the North was regarded in Egypt as the most influential cardinal point. The stellar cult was at an early period more influential than the solar cult, and that may be why the North is sometimes in the Pyramid Texts connected with the East. The paradise of the sun cult was for a time located "on the East side of the sky, in its Northern region among the Imperishable (stars)",² as a result apparently of the fusion of stellar and solar ideas and doctrines.

The following crosses illustrate ancient ideas regarding the cardinal points. In ancient Egypt, as in modern China,

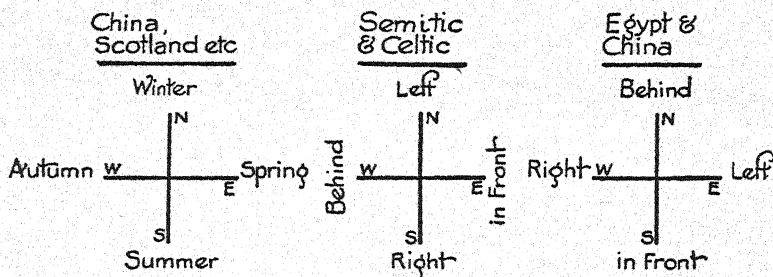


FIG. 13. CROSSES OF SEASONS, ETC.

¹ Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought*, pp. 108, 109.

² Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

the North is behind, the South in front, the East on the left and the West on the right. The Celtic and Semitic systems give the East in front, the North on the left, the South on the right and the West behind. The Hindus look North, the direction favoured especially by worshippers of Shiva and Ganesha, and so do the Polynesians, thus having the East on the right, the West on the left, and the South behind ; but the Aryo-Indians¹ had the East in front, the West behind, the North on the left and the South on the right, like the Celts and Semites. In pre-Columbian Mexican mythology the West (god, Quetzalcoatl) is in front, the East (god, Tlaloc) is behind, the North (god, Tezcatlipoca) is on the right, and the South (god, Huitzilopochtli) is on the left. The name of the last-mentioned god signifies "Humming bird to the left (south)".²

The Greek augurs looked North, and the Romans, like the Egyptians and Chinese, looked South, but also prayed to Jove's celestial seat among the northern stars.³ In Babylonia the East was in front, as indicated in a text which says :

Shamash before me, Sin behind me,
Nergal (south) to my right,
Ninib (north) to my left.

Marduk (representing the equinox) was the spring or morning sun ; Nebo the autumn or winter sun ; Ninib the midday or summer sun ; Nergal the winter or night sun. The North is also the full moon point.⁴ In figure 13a it will be observed that the seasons were connected with the cardinal points in other areas as well as in Babylonia. The original reason for this will be brought out in the next chapter.

The blending of stellar and solar beliefs may be traced in the Aryo-Indian texts, as in the earlier Pyramid Texts of Ancient Egypt. In the *Açwameda Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* (Section XLIII, sloka 10)⁵ it is stated :

The North is the Lord of all the points of the compass.

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 100 *et seq.*

² Brugsch, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, Vol. I, p. 255 ; R. Mitra, *Indo-Aryans*, I, pp. 72-3 ; Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, I, 240 ; D. A. Mackenzie, *Myths of Pre-Columbian America*, p. 287 ; De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Vol. III, p. 983 and IV, p. 26.

³ Dacier's *Horace* III, p. 339 ; Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book II, 693.

⁴ A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East* (English translation, London, 1911, pp. 25 *et seq.*).

⁵ P. C. Roy's translation, p. 106.

In the same *Parva* (Section XLIV, sloka 13), however, appears the further statement :

Of all the cardinal and subsidiary points of the horizon the Eastern is said to be the foremost and first born.

It may be that the North as " Lord " had a lunar significance.

The Hindus have from an early period regarded the South as " the second door of Dharma " (i.e., the " door of Yama ", the god of death) and " repair to the south " is the Hindu equivalent of " go to hell ", and a dreadful curse. The " river of death " is in the south and it is " filled with the bodies of persons condemned to hell ". The damned find the waters bitter, and there is thick gloom.

The Hindu West is the " house " of Varuna, ruler of ocean and " Lord of Waters " and of Vishnu. There the moon grows young again. There, too, is situated Mount Asta. Sleep and night come from the West. All the rivers that feed the ocean come from the west.

The East is " the source of all the prosperity of the gods, for it was there that Cakra (Indra) was first anointed as the King of the Celestials ".¹

In the *Satapatha Brahmana*² the East in front, is " a queen indeed " and there is Agni and " the divine Vasus "; the South, " on the right ", has for its " overlords " the Rudras and there, too, is Indra ; the West, which is " behind ", has for its overlords the Adityas and there, too, is Varuna ; the North, " on the left " has for its overlords the Maruts, and there, too, is Soma ; the Middle is " sovereign mistress, the Great Region, for the sovereign mistress that great region indeed is " ; there " all the gods are overlords " and there is Brihaspati.

There are other groupings of Hindu gods, as there are other groupings of pre-Columbian Aztec gods in addition to those given. Here it may be noted that the North-east is of special importance in Brahmanic religion. The priest faced the North-east because it was faced by Prajapati when he " created creatures ". The North-east is the direction of " the gate of the world of heaven, hence it is standing with face towards the North-east that one offers libations, and standing towards

¹ *Udyoga Parva* of the Mahābhārata (Roy's translation), p. 323, *et seq.*

² Eggeeling's translation in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIII (part IV), pp. 100 *et seq.*

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the North-east that one leads up the dakshinas ; it is by the gate that he (the priest) thus makes him enter into the world of heaven".¹

To the Ainu the North-east, according to Batchelor, is the most sacred of all points.

The North-east is likewise of importance in Celtic mythology. In the "Cuchullin Saga" the god Lugh ("the Celtic Apollo") is referred to as "a lone man out of the North-eastern quarter", while the goddess Morrigan comes "from the North-west".²

Winifred Faraday, dealing with the Scandinavian god Thor, draws attention to the interesting fact that

His journeys are always to the east ; so in *Harbardsljod*, "I was in the east, fighting the male-violent giant brides . . . I was in the east and guarding the river when Svarang's sons attacked me". The Giants live in the east (*Hymiskvida* 5) ; Thor threatened Loki : "I will fling thee up into the east, and no one shall see thee more" (*Lokasenna* 59) ; the fire-giants at Ragnarök are to come from the east : "Hrym comes driving from the east, he lifts his shield before him . . . A ship comes from the east, Muspell's sons will come sailing over the sea, and Loki steers (*Völuspá* 50, 51)".³

When Odin visits the vala's grave, he rides to a door "on the eastward" and sings spells to make her rise and answer his questions.

In the "Elder" or "Poetic Edda" it is stated :

To the prophetess he began
A magic song to chant,
Towards the north he looked,
Potent runes applied,
A spell pronounced,
An answer demanded,
Until compelled she rose.⁴

That the cardinal points were of importance in ancient Egyptian religion is further emphasised by the evidence afforded by the pyramids. Those of Khufu, Khafre and Menkure at Gizeh, near Cairo, are, as Brugsch has emphasized, "perfectly adjusted to the cardinal points of the horizon—

¹ Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana*, Part III, p. 252.

² Eleanor Hull, *The Cuchullin Saga*, pp. 170, 171 and p. 103.

³ *The Edda* (Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance and Folklore). London, 1902, p. 13.

⁴ R. B. Anderson, *Norse Mythology*. Chicago, 1907, pp. 232-3.

the South and North, the East and West".¹ All are entered from the North. The sarcophagi in which the bodies of the Pharaohs were enclosed, lay with "feet to South, head to North, along the Western wall".² The pyramid at Medûm, between Memphis and the Fayum, a terraced structure like the Babylonian "zikkurat"³ (temple tower), opens to the North, while the terraced pyramid of Sakkara is directed more to the North-east, and has four entrances. On the other hand the entrance to the mastabas are, as a rule, to the East, while the "false door" is on the West. Maspero says there is "a kind of forecourt open to the North".

In Mesopotamia the early builders paid close attention to the cardinal points. Dr. Wallis Budge, dealing with the evidence afforded by a British Museum tablet, says that "it appears that the cardinal points of the Babylonians were rather different from ours; our N-W being their N". This makes our S-E their South, and S-W their W and our N-E their E. But it may be that like the Celts and early Hindus the Sumerians had beliefs regarding their deities coming from the North-east, South-west, etc., instead of directly from the North, South, etc., as in Egypt.

According to Heuzey, who wrote at a time when the archæologists paid more attention than they now do to the ancient Doctrine of the Cardinal Points, which is so prominent in religious texts, the angles, and not the sides, of certain ziggurats, temples and other buildings were turned towards the cardinal points. The Sumerian temple of Nippur has its angles pointing to the north, south, east and west. The sacred chamber of the god Enlil is to the north-west and opens to the south-east. The temple of Eridu and various buildings at Nippur have similarly their angles directed to the cardinal points.⁴

The Chinese have for long paid much attention to the cardinal points. Indeed, the *yang* and *yin* ideas and the doctrine of *fung-shui* cannot be understood without reference

¹ *A History of Egypt* (English translation). London, 1881, p. 86.

² Maspero, *Egyptian Archæology*, pp. 129 *et seq.*

³ Or ziggurat.

⁴ Budge, *Babylonian Life and History* (1884), pp. 110, 23; Jastrow, *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria*, 1911, p. 292, Plate 24; L. W. King, *A History of Sumer and Akkad*, 1910, pp. 36, 88.

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to the beliefs regarding the cardinal points. De Groot gives the following arbitrary Chinese connexions :

East : The Blue (or green) Dragon god ; Spring ; wood ; planet Jupiter ; liver and gall.

South : The Red Bird god ; Summer ; fire ; the sun ; planet Mars ; heart and large intestines.

West : The White Tiger god ; Autumn ; wind ; metal planet Venus ; lungs and small intestines.

North : The Black Tortoise god ; Winter ; cold ; water ; planet Mercury ; kidneys and bladder.¹

It will be noted that the internal organs are connected with the Chinese cardinal points.

In Ancient Egypt the four gods of the cardinal points were in the Pyramid Age solarized as the four Horuses of the East, but they still retained their original character as the "four sons of Horus". The gods of the cardinal points prepare the reed floats for the sun god and the dead.²

Budge writes in this connexion :

In the *Book of the Dead* these four children of Horus play very prominent parts, and the deceased endeavoured to gain their help and protection at all costs, both by offerings and prayers. In the pictures of the funeral procession four men draw along the coffin containing the mummified intestines of the deceased, four animals are taken for sacrifice, and all the instruments used in the ceremony of "opening the mouth", as well as the vases, and boxes of unguents, etc., are quadruplicate. Even prayers and formulæ are said four times over, e.g., in Chapter XL, the deceased in addressing the Eater of the Ass says, "I know thee", four times ; and in Chapter CXXIV, he says, "I am pure", four times. Most important of all, however, it was to remember that the four children of Horus shared the protection of the body of the deceased among them, and as far back as the Vth Dynasty we find that they presided over his life in the underworld. The name of the four gods are Hâp, Tuamutef, Amset and Qebhsennuf ; this is the order they are mentioned in the Pyramid Texts. . . . The two arms of the dead were identified with Hapi and Tuamutef and his two legs with Amset and Qebhsennuf.³

These gods of the cardinal points protected the internal organs of the deceased which, after mummification had been

¹ *The Religious System of China*, Book I, Vol. III, p. 983, and IV, 26.

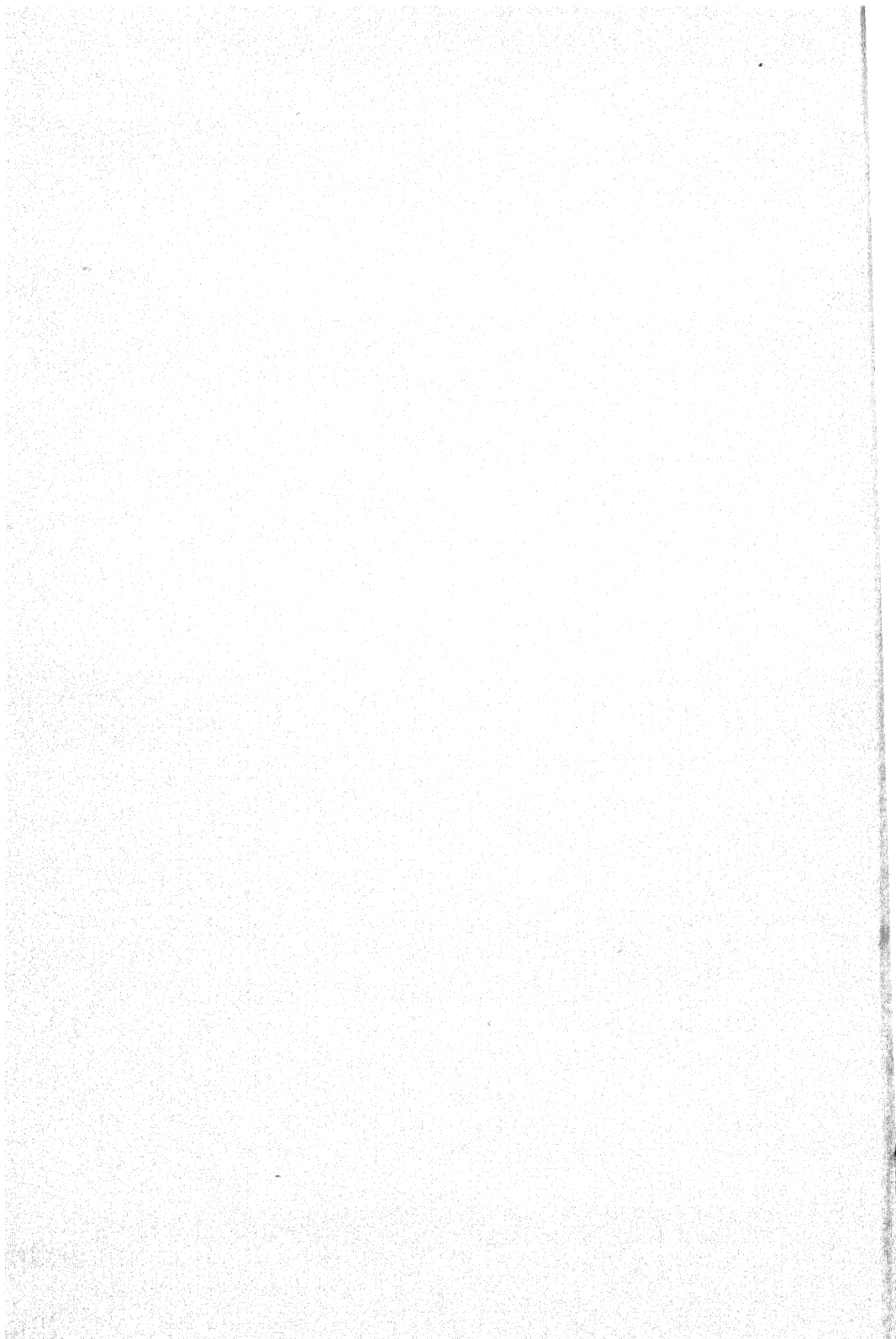
² Breasted, *op. cit.*, pp. 153 *et seq.*, p. 158.

³ *Gods of the Egyptians*, Vol. I, pp. 491-2.



PLATE V

CHINESE BUDDHA WITH SWASTIKA SYMBOL,
from drawing in U.S. National Museum (after Thomas Wilson)



introduced, were placed in Canopic jars. Budge gives the connexions between the cardinal points and the internal organs in accordance with the evidence afforded by the "Jersey mummy" described by Pettigrew in the *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries*, 1837. But Elliot Smith,¹ who examined hundreds of mummies, gives the arrangement included in the following :

East : Tuamutef ; stomach ; protects arm ; on left.
 South : Amset ; liver ; protects leg ; in front.
 West : Qebhsennuf ; intestines ; protects leg ; on right.
 North : Hapi ; lungs ; protects arm ; behind.

The Maya of Central America also connected the internal organs with the cardinal points, their "canopic jars" being placed under the protection of the Bacabs, the gods of the four quarters. Their arbitrary connexions are as follows :

East : Canzicnal (Serpent Being) ; red ; fire.
 South : Hobnil (the Belly) ; yellow ; air.
 West : Hozan ek (the Disembowelled Black one) ; black ; earth.
 North : Zaczini (White Being) ; white ; water.

In Egypt, it will be noted, the lungs are connected with the North, whence issues the "air of life", while in China the lungs are connected with the west, the cardinal point of the Tiger wind god. In ancient Egyptian literature the north wind, as stated in Section II proceeds from Nut ; it is also said to proceed from the nostrils of the oldest god, and in the *Book of the Dead* occurs the significant passage, "Give the sweet breath of the North wind to the Osiris (the dead man)".²

Many instances could be quoted to show that it was a widespread practice to pay close attention to the cardinal points in connexion with death and burial. A few will suffice. In China the dying man lay under the North window with his head towards the East, and when he died his head was turned towards the South.³ When buried, however, the head is placed to the North and feet to the South.⁴ The Ainu bury their dead with the feet to the North. In India trenches are dug

¹ The "Heart and Reins" articles in *The Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, 1911, pp. 41 et seq.

² *Records of the Past*, IV, p. 67 ; Birch, *Book of the Dead*, p. 170.

³ Legge, *Li Ki*, II, pp. 136 and 173 et seq.

⁴ De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Book I.

to the North of a funeral pyre and the mourners, after purifying themselves, spread out their clothing to the North and wait until the stars appear.¹ Layard has recorded of the Yezidis of Mesopotamia that they turn the faces of their dead towards the East. In a footnote he writes :

All Eastern sects appear to have had some Kubleh, or holy point, to which the face was to be turned during prayer. The Jews, it will be remembered, looked towards Jerusalem. The Sabæans, according to some, to the north star, or, according to others, towards that part of the heavens in which the sun rises. The early Christians chose the East; Mohammed, who recognized the general custom, and found it necessary to adhere to it, appointed the holy Kaaba of Mecca to be the Kubleh of his disciples.²

Siouffi writes regarding the Subbo or Mandoyo (ancients) of Mesopotamia :

When the sick man has breathed his last breath, the body is laid on a mat, with the head to the South and the feet to the North, so that the north star may be in front of the eyes. The grave is also dug North and South. . . . The North is the abode of Avather (the angel of the scales, judge of the dead and guardian of paradise) and there, too, is Olmi-Danhuro (paradise).²

In Scotland the North side of a burial ground was formerly reserved for murderers and suicides. This custom is not unknown in England. In the *Daily News* (July 18th, 1889) it has been stated that the North side of the churchyard of Seaford in Sussex is "devoted to suicides and bodies washed up from the sea" and that nonconformists object to be buried there and were in dispute with the vicar on the subject. Wordsworth refers to the North-side burials in the lines :

'Tis said that some have died for love ;
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold North's unhallowed ground ;
Because the wretched man himself has slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.

Some Christian churches have a "Devil's door" on the North side. It is near the baptismal font. This door in

¹ Mitra, *Aryo-Indians*, II, p. 141.

² *Nineveh and its Remains*. London, 1856, p. 191.

³ Siouffi, *Relig. des Soubbas*, p. 124.

Wellcombe Church, Morvenstowe, was opened at a baptism so that the fiend might depart through it.¹

Professor Douglas Hyde, Dublin, has drawn my attention to some significant references to the cardinal points in his *The Religious Songs of Connacht*.² In an Irish poem from Belmullet, County Mayo, a living person holds converse with the soul of a dead man, which says :

I saw the prowess of Death assembling :
On the side of the north, black walls of fire,
On the side of the south the people of Christ
Gathering amidst the angels,
The Glorious Virgin hastening them.³

An evening prayer from Innismaan declares :

From the south shall Mary come
When we hear the judgment drum.⁴

Another poem says :

May the guardian angels of the right hand (the South),
Make me avoid the spirit of the left hand (the North).⁵

A little "rann" from Connemara runs :

I lie down on my right side,
And I sleep on my left side,
I give my back to the Man most evil (the Devil),
And I give my face to the Son of God.

Professor Hyde has translated for me the following Irish poem which is given by Nicholas O'Kearney in the preface to "Feis Tighe Chonáin" (Vol. II of the Ossianic Society's publications) :

FATE

The son (child) who is born when the wind blows from the West,
Shall obtain raiment and shall obtain food ;
He shall obtain from his lord
Only food and raiment.

The son (child) who is born when the wind blows from the North,
Shall win victory and be subject to defeat ;
He shall be wounded, he shall wound another,
Before he shall ascend to Heaven of the Angels (die).

¹ T. F. Thistleton Dyer, *Church-Lore Gleanings*.

² London and Dublin, 1906.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 273.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

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The son (child) who is born when the wind is from the South,
Shall get honey: he shall get fruit;
In his house he shall entertain
Both bishops and musical performers.

The locality of gold is the wind from the East;
This is the best wind of all the winds;
The son (child) who is born when that wind blows,
Want shall never reach him.

Whenever the wind does not blow
Over the grass of the plain, or the heather;
Whosoever is then born
Whether male or female, shall be an idiot.

In an Egyptian magical papyrus there is a "Chapter to open the gate of this House" which reads:

I have opened heaven, I have opened earth, I enter, O ye
Western and Eastern doors. Let me enter. I am the wind
passing by you.¹

The swastika with curved limbs was among the American Indians recognized as a form of the cross enclosed by inner and outer circles (figure 14a). Hamilton Cushing notes²

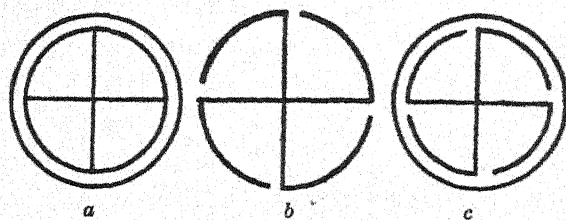


FIG. 14. FOUR WINDS SYMBOL

that figure 14c is "a very significant variant", while figure 14b is the "symbol of the four winds" and is "common throughout ancient America from Ohio to the ruins of Yucatan and the Andes". According to ancient American belief the winds entered through the spaces (doors) at the four quarters.

The revolving cross is dealt with in the next chapter, where it will be found to be not only a swastika but a symbol intimately connected with the spiral.

¹ *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI, p. 123.

² *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 9, No. 2.

As we have seen, the swastika, which was essentially a symbol of the four cardinal points, was used also as a symbol of the deities of each of the four cardinal points in common with other symbols which illustrated apparently the various attributes of these deities. It was firstly a god-symbol. Further, it signified that a man was holy or deified when shown on some part of his body or image or clothing. Holy animals were distinguished as such by having the swastika depicted on or near them, and sometimes the swastika was a symbol of the deity, as were the pillar, the mountain, the holy tree, the

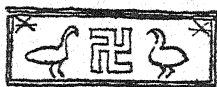


FIG. 15a.

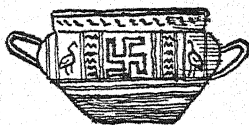


FIG. 15b

double horns, etc., with sacred animals in heraldic opposition (figure 14a, b and c).¹ Other symbols were used in like manner. The Apis bull of Egypt had its sacred symbolic markings, and so had the sacred animals of the Sumerians

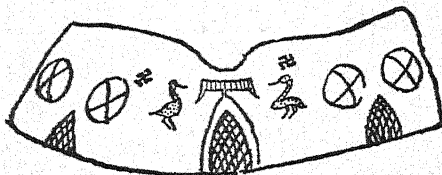


FIG. 15c

and Babylonians. The pre-Columbian deities of the Americas are loaded with accumulated cult symbols.

The swastika and cross were symbols not only of certain deities, of the winds and of the influences issuing on winds from the cardinal points, but of the sacred substances supposed to be impregnated with the vital energy of the deities.

In Mexico the hieroglyphs of precious metals and precious stones were of symbolic shape. Those of gold are figure 16a, b, c and d, which are forms of the swastika. It will be seen that a and b resemble the Celtic knot (figure 3).

¹ Fig. 14a from Cyprian vase; Fig. 14b from Greek vase (Smyrna); Fig. 14c from Greek vase (after Thos. Wilson).

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The Mexican kings accumulated gold and other precious (sacred) things in the royal palace. To the Aztecs gold was *teocuitlatl* ("excrecence of the god").¹ In ancient Egypt² gold was the "flesh" of the god, and there was a "Horus of Gold" and a goddess Nubt (from *nub*, gold), who was identified with Hathor. In India gold was a divine "life giver", and

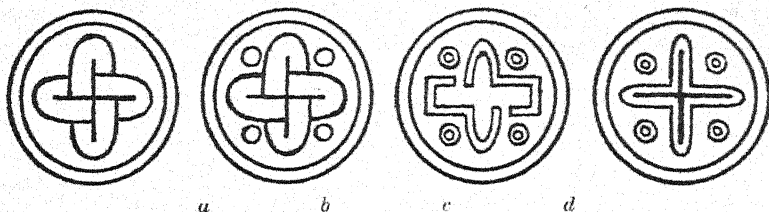


FIG. 16. MEXICAN SYMBOLS OF GOLD

(After M. H. Saville, *The Goldsmith's Art in Ancient Mexico*)

"a form of the gods", and it is explicitly stated in sacred texts that "gold is immortal life . . . gold, indeed, is fire, light and immortality".³ "He who swallows gold", says a Chinese text, "will exist as gold; he who swallows jade will exist as long as jade". Both gold and jade are declared to be "the essence" of the heavens.⁴ The Gauls threw gold into their sacred lakes and the Romans sold these to men who found the speculation profitable.⁵ Buddhists increased "religious merit" by collecting and wearing symbols, sacred metals, pearls, gems, coral, amber, etc.; and sacred merit-increasing objects with symbols in the Land of Bliss included "nets of gold adorned with emblems of the dolphin, the swastika, the nandiyāvarta, and the moon".⁶

¹ Marshall H. Saville, *The Goldsmith's Art in Ancient Mexico*. New York, 1920; H. J. Spinden, *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America*. New York, 1922, p. 201.

² *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. IV, Part IV, pp. 241 et seq.

³ Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana* (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIV, pp. 187, 203, 236, 239, 348-50). Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhita*, Vol. XIX, 26, p. 937 (*Harvard Oriental Series*, Vols. VII, and VIII. Cambridge, Mass., 1908).

⁴ De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Book I, Vol. I, pp. 272-3.

⁵ *Diodorus Siculus*, V. 27; *Strabo*, IV, c1, §13.

⁶ *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts* (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIX, pp. 16-17 and p. 50.)

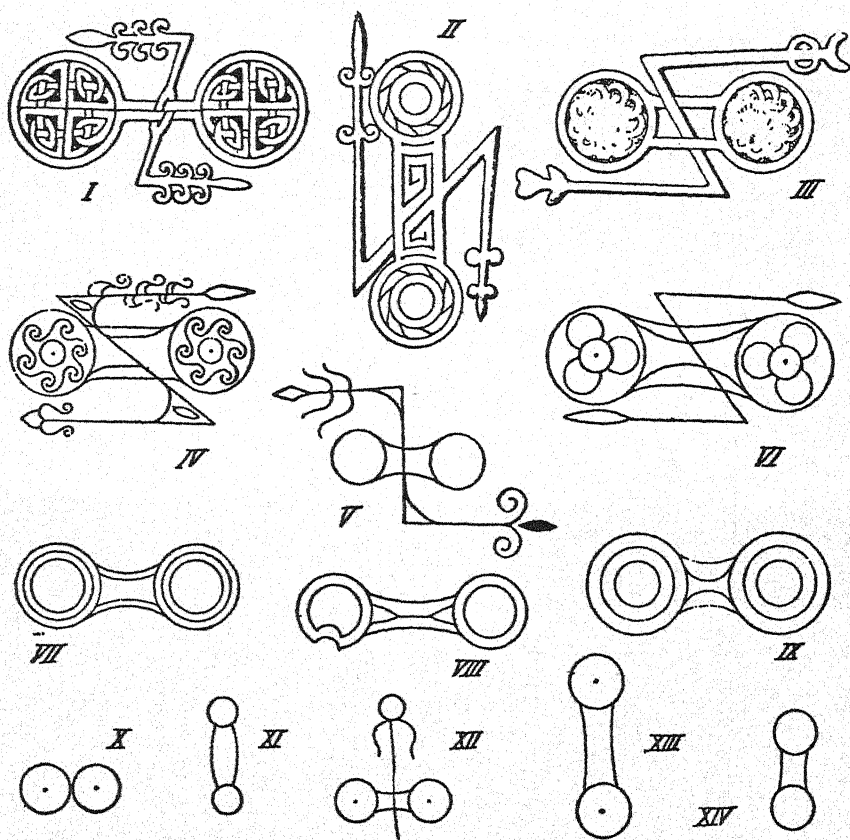


PLATE VI

SCOTTISH SWASTIKA AND RING SYMBOLS

From sculptured stones: I, St. Vigean; II, Monifieth; III, Elgin; IV, Dunnichen; VI, Bourtie; VII, Abbotsford; VIII, Newton; IX, Golspie; X, Stonehaven. From caves at East Wemyss, Fife: V, XI, XII, XIII, XIV. After Stuart's *Sculptured Stones*.

The doctrine of the four mythical Ages of the World (the Hindu Yugas) was, it would appear, originally connected with the four cardinal points, and all that these signified. The same may be said of the four castes of the Aryo-Indians for these are in Sanskrit texts connected with the four Yugas. The four world rivers, the four world mountains, the four seas (the Black, White, Red and Yellow), and the four lands of the world, referred to in Gaelic as "the four red divisions of the earth", were all similarly connected with the four cardinal points.

The particular maze (figure 17) formed from the equal-limbed cross (a Welsh example for which I am indebted to Sir H. A.

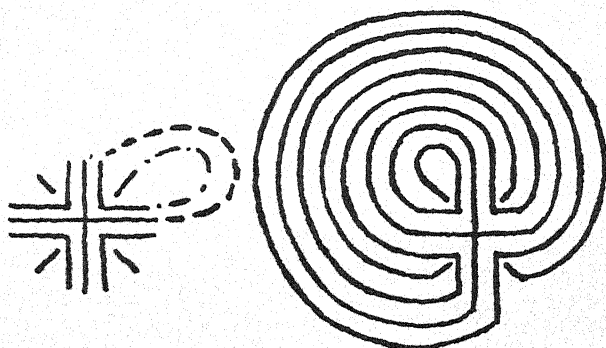


FIG. 17. THE MAZE FROM CROSS WITH CURVED LIMBS

Miers of the University of Manchester, who had it from a Welsh professor), and the Hindu nandyavartaya (figure 18), so greatly favoured by the Buddhists, indicate how fundamental were the doctrines symbolized by the cross and swastika.

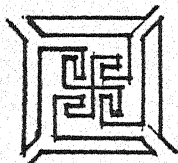


FIG. 18.
NANDYAVARTAYA

There are interesting variants of the swastika symbol on the sculptured stones of Scotland, examples of which are given on Plate VI. Those from St. Vigean (figure I), Monifieth (figure II) and Elgin (figure III) show more clearly than do the other three from Bourtie (figure VI), Wemyss' Caves (figure V) and Dunnichen (figure IV) that the so-called "zig-zag" ornament and the so-called "spectacle ornament" were united to form the swastika.

These "ornaments" were used separately, and examples are given of the "spectacle ornament" as used alone and united by crescents or otherwise (figure IX), or not united (figure X), or in combination as in a Fife cave with another symbol (figure XII). No doubt the complex Scottish swastika represented complex beliefs. The complexity of the symbols is eloquent of the culture-mixing process.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIRAL

SECTION I

WAS THE SPIRAL A SYMBOL OR AN ART-MOTIF ?

Theory of savage origin—Wide distribution of Spiral—Older in Near East than in Oceania—Unknown in Hawaii—Luck motifs and Art motifs—Diffusion theory—Independent origin theory—Natural spirals—Had the Spiral a meaning?—Hallstatt spirals—Angular spirals—Curves to right and to left—A. Lang on “natural ornamentation”—H. R. Hall on origin of spiral—Archæological evidence—Elliot Smith on spiral symbolism—Thunder gods and spiral—A magico-religious symbol.

The problem of the spiral, like that of the swastika, not only takes us back to the beginnings of civilization, but necessitates the investigation of the archæology, the art history, and the customs and beliefs of a variety of peoples and cultures widely separated in space and time.

Some antiquaries regard the problem as a simple rather than a complex one. They consider the spiral to be nothing more than an ancient “art motif” which, as we gather from their writings, pleased the fancy of the early craftsmen who “decorated” pottery, woodwork and stone, and made very special appeal to those who, it is assumed, were as anxious as are modern tradesmen to produce new and attractive forms of jewellery so as to induce patrons to make purchases. Some, indeed, go to the length of asserting that the spiral, like certain other ancient designs, was of “savage origin”, and should therefore be regarded as the product of a perfectly “natural” decorative art. They would thus have us regard the “Art for Art’s sake” movement as one of immense antiquity. It is difficult, however, to accept the theory of a “natural” Art.

The spiral was certainly given artistic treatment by craftsmen in different countries, and when combined with other designs

it undoubtedly added to their artistic effect. We find it either alone, or united with other "art-motifs" or symbols, among the relics of ancient Egypt, Crete and Mycenæ, of Central Europe, Scandinavia and the British Isles, of Mesopotamia, India, China and Japan, of Indonesia and Polynesia, and even of pre-Columbian America. But it was not everywhere associated with the same phase of material culture. In Oceania it is a Neolithic design, for the Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians made no use of metals, but it cannot be traced in the Eastern Mediterranean area before the introduction of copper and bronze. It was, however, undoubtedly of much greater antiquity in Crete and Troy than in Polynesia and Melanesia. Indeed, it had not reached some parts of Polynesia when that island region was first discovered by Europeans. "The idea of the use of the spiral as a design element", writes Ruth H. Greiner in this connexion, "had never spread as far as Hawaii".¹

Anthropologists are divided in opinion regarding the significance of the spiral. Some follow those archaeologists who persistently refer to it as an "art-motif", while others are convinced that it had, wherever found, a definite symbolic value. The latter view may seem to some to be an extreme one. But those who cling to it consider themselves justified in regarding the spiral as a symbol, or as "originally a symbol", even although certain "backward peoples" may, in the course of time, have forgotten its precise significance and continued by mere force of custom to use it in combination with other symbols, or alone and prominently, or simply to "fill in" the spaces left by designs which conveyed a definite meaning, in the belief that, in a vague sense, it was "lucky". Among "backward peoples" the vague "luck motif" is not infrequently found to be more in favour than that which we designate the "art motif". All "luck motifs", whether indefinite or otherwise, have histories rooted in ancient systems of belief either acquired, or so far as is known, wholly or partly developed locally.

Anthropologists of the "Evolution school" favour the view that the persisting spiral, like several other widespread designs, was of "independent origin", or "spontaneous generation",

¹ *Polynesian Decorative Designs* (Bernice P. Bishop, Museum Bulletin 7). Honolulu, Hawaii, 1923, p. 52.

in the different culture areas of the Old and New Worlds. Those of the "Diffusion school", on the other hand, incline to search for a single area of origin from which, by a gradual process, the spiral, with much else, has been carried to the limits of the habitable world. Withal, they attach importance to the fact that in their favoured area of origin—Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean—the spiral did not make appearance until after the introduction of the agricultural mode of life and especially of the necessary Calendar of the early agriculturists. They consequently regard it as a product of civilization, not of savagery, as an expression of ideas, not of instincts. Figure 1, Plate VII, is a sculptured stone from Strathmartin, Forfarshire, Scotland. It illustrates the use made of the spiral in connexion with Scottish symbols.

Some "Diffusionists", who consider the spiral to be essentially a symbol, have connected it with whorled shells, with the octopus, which in repose curves its tentacles in spiral form, and with the ram's horns of various outstanding deities. In doing so, they have emphasized the religious or magico-religious associations of the objects in question. Their list, however, can be greatly added to. Certain reptiles, plants and animals figure in the ancient mythological collections. Serpents were sacred in many lands, and they coil themselves in spiral form; many climbing plants, including the sacred ivy, the sacred vine, the sacred mistletoe, etc., assume spiral forms in the course of growth; while by "tree worshippers" it could not have been overlooked, for they were close observers, that the leaves of certain plants have a spiral arrangement, and that the spiral "motif" is displayed on the shoots of quite a number of succulent plants and in the cones of many firs—the fir cone was a prominent religious symbol in Assyria—as well as on the branches of conifers and lycopodiums. The dog, which was connected with religion at an early period, often performs a spiral movement before lying down to sleep, and early man was prone to attach importance to the habits of animals, and especially of those he had deified. Withal, there are spiral gusts of wind on calm days, and in some lands, raging and dusty whirlwinds, and in connexion with these, as will be shown, there is much significant lore. In seeking, therefore, for the religious or magico-religious origin of the

spiral, as a symbol suggested at the outset by Nature, a wide choice is afforded the modern investigator.

It may be emphasized at this point that it would be well to keep in mind the fact that early man had similarly a wide choice of examples from which to make a selection. One cannot help wondering therefore how and where and why he began to copy his first spiral from Nature. Was he attracted by the octopus, the climbing plant, or the coiled serpent? Or did he first display a puzzled interest in the habits of his sleepy dogs, or in the curious whorled shell-house which the leisurely snail carries on its back? Did any of these, or all of these, make an irresistible appeal to his æsthetic sense? It is difficult to answer anyone of these questions in the affirmative. Perhaps, after all, there was a psychological motive, rooted in early man's store of accumulated knowledge and religious ideas, for the selection of the spiral as a symbol and therefore as an expression of definite beliefs.

If the spiral did mean something quite definite to the ancient craftsman who, in his magico-religious art, said what he meant in his own way, and in accordance with prevailing beliefs and customs, we can understand why he and his fellows began to take a very special interest in the characteristic habits of the octopus and the dog, in all varieties of climbing plants and so on. Once the spiral had become a sacred symbol, it would appear that all things displaying a natural tendency to assume spiral form were bound sooner or later to be invested with a degree of sanctity.

But when we have accepted as much, it must be recognized that a difficult phase of the problem emerges, and it cannot be ignored. If the spiral meant something of very definite and precise character to the ancient Ægean and Egyptian craftsmen, did it mean the same thing, or convey any meaning at all to the pre-Columbian American and to the New Zealand Polynesian—the so-called "savage Maori"?

Like all other matters connected with early man and with "backward peoples" who at different periods acquired and have perpetuated certain beliefs and customs, this particular phase of the spiral problem calls for serious and painstaking inquiry. We must, in the first place, examine whatever evidence is available, and if we are to do so with open minds, we should refrain from concluding light-heartedly and rashly

that natural spirals, whether whorled shells, coiled serpents, unfolding ferns, climbing plants, or whirlwinds, must have spontaneously and inevitably appealed to the æsthetic sense supposed to be dormant in all mankind. Both the pre-Columbian American and the New Zealand Maori had, as will be shown, very definite and significant beliefs connected with the spiral.

In different parts of the world, and at different periods, the spiral was used in a variety of ways and produced in a variety of forms. Interesting examples are found among those early artifacts which some archæologists regard as merely "orna-

ments for personal decoration", although there is sufficient evidence to show that most, if not all of them, were ornaments for personal protection and prosperity.

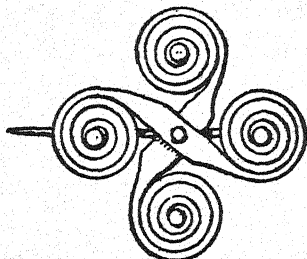


FIG. 19.
HALLSTATT SPIRAL SWASTIKA

From the Early Iron Age remains unearthed at Hallstatt in Central Europe come the brooches here reproduced (figures 19, 20a and 20b). One (figure 19) is a revolving swastika, and each of the arms is in spiral form. It was evidently of similar significance to the swastika (figure 9, Plate I) with angular spirals.

The spiral was in Oceania, as in the Mediterranean area, given an angular form. Ruth H. Greiner writes in this connection with regard to Polynesia and Melanesia :

It is to be expected that several designs which appear both as angular, geometric and curvilinear patterns are fundamentally expressions of the same concept. Perhaps the best example is the spiral, in which the basic concept is a single line wound round and round a centre. Whether each turn is a curve or an angle is a matter of secondary importance. Significant in this connexion is the observation that some groups of people in the Pacific use one form of the spiral almost to the exclusion of the other. The Marquesans use both forms, but the angular spiral is dominant. The pierced oval locally known as eipuoto is obviously related to the pierced rectangle, but the Marquesans use the curvilinear form more frequently than the angular form.¹

¹ *Polynesian Decorative Designs*, pp. 8, 9.

52 THE MIGRATION OF SYMBOLS

The other two Hallstatt brooches (figures 20*a* and 20*b*) are double spirals. In each example one spiral curves to the right following the course of the seasons and the sun, east to west by south, while the other is directed against the course of the

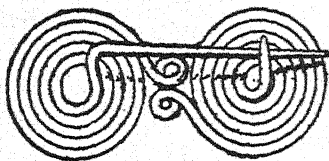


FIG. 20*a*.
HALLSTATT FIBULA SPIRALS

seasons and the sun. If these designs had a symbolic significance—and they appear to have had as amulets—it remains for us to discover why the craftsmen combined these “lucky” and “unlucky” movements in a single artifact.

Light is thrown on this aspect of the problem, as will be shown, by the evidence afforded by certain ancient folk customs. It is important when dealing with ancient religious and magico-religious ideas to search for clues in surviving or recorded beliefs and customs.

But before investigating the evidence afforded by folk-lore and mythology, it would be well to review the literature connected with the spiral. This cannot be accomplished here with any degree of fulness, so voluminous is the literature in question. Consideration can, however, be given to the opinions of three outstanding representatives of different “schools of thought”. These are Dr. H. R. Hall, of the British Museum, a distinguished and erudite archæologist, the late Mr. Andrew Lang, a pioneer exponent of the “Evolution school” of Anthropology, and Professor Elliot Smith, a notable scientist and the outstanding leader of the “Diffusion school”.

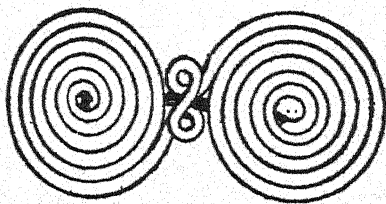


FIG. 20*b*. HALLSTATT FIBULA SPIRALS

Mr. Andrew Lang was convinced that the spiral was of savage origin, and mainly because he found it among the artifacts of certain peoples he was pleased to regard as “savages”—a rather indefinite term. He was, therefore, not in the least puzzled by the wide distribution of the spiral “art motif”, as he frankly designates it, or by its association with various phases of culture in ancient and recent times.

He regarded its association with the "savage" as perfectly "natural", and he laboured the view, in this regard, that "the mind and materials of men are the same everywhere", and that, therefore, wherever one finds the savage one may expect to find the spiral. Its absence in Hawaii was unknown to Mr. Lang. We are left to conjecture how he would have explained away this interesting phase of the problem.

To Mr. Lang "ornamentation" was as "natural" as chicken-pox or measles. It was as "natural" to find savages developing "ornamentation" as it was to find children developing rashes on their skins. He deals with the matter as a whole in the chapter entitled "The Art of Savages" of his *Custom and Myth*,¹ where he writes :

The Greek fret pattern especially seems to be one of the earliest that men learnt to draw (figure 21). The *svastika*, as it is called,² the cross with lines at right angles to each limb, is found everywhere—in India, Greece, Scotland, Peru—as a *natural bit of ornament*. The allegorizing fancy of the Indians gave it a mystic meaning, and the learned have built I know not what worlds of religious theories on the pre-Christian cross, which is probably a *piece of hasty decorative work with no original mystic meaning at all*.³

Mr. Lang overlooked the fact that the swastika had a meaning in ancient Greece.



FIG. 21.
GREEK FRET

It was sometimes used to indicate that an animal was sacred, as the evidence afforded by ancient Greek vases indicates (figures 15, 23 and 24). Lang's

methods were somewhat of the "slap-dash" order. It is improbable that early man was ever as hasty as was on occasion the author of *Custom and Myth*.

Having so easily disposed of the problems of the Greek fret, the cross, and the



FIG. 22.
JAPANESE BRONZE
BUDDHA WITH
EIGHT SWASTIKAS
ON PEDestal
(after Mr. Thos.
Wilson)

¹ London (1910 Edition), pp. 276 *et seq.*

² Why "as it is called"? This is the Hindu name of the Symbol.

³ The italics are mine.

swastika, Mr. Lang proceeds to dispose of the spiral problem. "One is sometimes tempted", we find him confessing, "to regard the favourite Maori spiral as an imitation of the form,

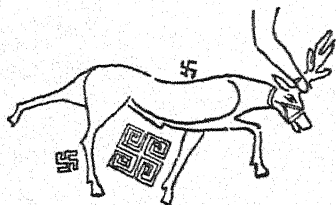


FIG. 23. FROM GREEK VASE

not unlike that of a bishop's crozier at the top, taken by the great native ferns". He offers no explanation why the fern should have specially interested the Maori, nor did he, apparently, know that there is a Maori fern symbol which does not in the least resemble a spiral, being simply of nail form, with a bulge in the middle. But two pages further on he appears to have forgotten all about the fern, and to be content with the view that the spiral had been acquired by the Maori. He proceeds ;

The style of spirals and curves . . . once acquired (as it was by the New Zealanders), became a favourite of some races, especially of the Celtic. Anyone who will study either the ornaments of Mycenæ, or those of any old Scotch or Irish collection, will readily recognize in that art the development of a system of ornament like that of the Maoris. Classical Greece, on the other hand, followed more in the track of the ancient system of straight and slanted lines, and we do not



FIG. 24. FROM GREEK VASE

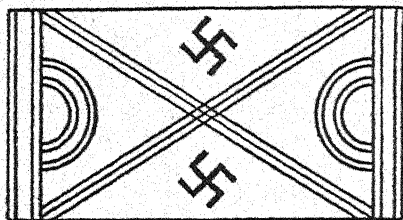


FIG. 25. FROM CYPRUS VASE

Cross of N.-E., S.-E., S.-W. and N.-W., with Swastika and ring symbols of cardinal points

find in the later Greek art that love of interlacing coils and spirals which is so remarkable among the Celts and which is very manifest in the ornaments of the Mycenæan hoards—that is, perhaps, of the ancient Greek heroic age.

Mr. Lang did not perceive that the Greeks

continued the use of the spiral in its angular form, because it expressed something which the craftsmen understood and

was understood by others. He found himself for once confronted by a difficulty which he was unable to surmount and wrote :

The causes of these differences in the development of ornament, the causes that make Celtic genius follow one track, and pursue to its æsthetic limits one early motif, while classical art went on a severer line, it is, perhaps, impossible at present to ascertain.

He, however, clung to his theory of the savage origin of a meaningless art :

It is plain enough that later Art has done little more than develop ideas of ornament already familiar to untutored races.

Thus "ideas of ornament" were the only ideas that the "savages," the Celts and the Greeks had to express ! When

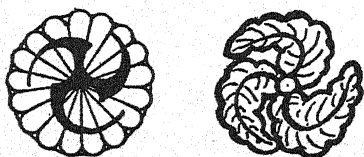


FIG. 26. JAPANESE SYMBOLS

we find, however, that one design was superimposed upon another, as in the Japanese examples given (figure 26), it is difficult to accept Mr. Lang's theory. Apparently the Japanese were expressing something

more than their sense of the beautiful.

Mr. Lang was not perturbed even when he flatly contradicted himself in a single chapter. Having disposed to his immediate satisfaction of the spiral, the swastika, the Greek fret and the equal-limbed cross, he arrives at the following conclusion :

It has been shown that the art which aims at decoration is better adapted to both the purposes and materials of savages than the art which aims at representation. (p. 290.)

But a few pages further on (pp. 298-299) he declares with regard to the artists of the Aurignacian, Solutrean and Magdalenian stages of Palæolithic culture :

The oldest inhabitants of Europe who have left any traces of their lives and handiwork must have been savages.

Dealing with "palæolithic man" as a savage, he continues :

Yet in him we must recognize a skill more akin to the spirit of modern art than is found in any other savage race.

Palæolithic man, like other savages, decorated his weapons ; but, as I have already said, he did not usually decorate them *in the common savage manner* with ornamental patterns. He scratched on bits of bone spirited representations of all the animals whose remains are found mixed with his own.

Of course, the artistic efforts of "palæolithic man" were not confined to "bits of bone" or to "weapons"; he engraved and painted realistic representations of animals in deep caves—sometimes in almost inaccessible depths a mile to a mile and a half from the entrance—so that few could see them, just as the Egyptians carved and painted gods and scenes of everyday life inside tombs which were closed to the public, being intimately connected with the welfare of the soul in the Otherworld and having therefore a magico-religious significance. At this point, however, we may leave Mr. Lang, who on one page asserted that decoration was "better adapted to both the purposes and materials of savages than the art which aims at representation", and on another, impressed us with the fact that the art of representation was practised by the earliest savages of whom we have knowledge. His peroration on "savage realism" need not delay us. The confident theorist is often his own severest critic.¹

Dr. H. R. Hall is, in dealing with the spiral problem, a representative exponent of what may be designated the "Merely pretty" theory. Like Mr. Lang, he is prone to regard early man's "ornaments" as ornaments and nothing more. His wide and intimate knowledge of archæological data enables him to avoid the pitfalls into which Mr. Lang so often stumbled. But he, too, is guilty of hazardous assumption when he adheres to the belief that the early artists and art-craftsmen were merely decorators of the "Art for Art's sake" school.

Dr. Hall's view regarding the spiral is that it had a definite origin in the Near East and has, therefore, a history, and that it spread to various areas in Europe and Western Asia and to Egypt from its definite centre of origin. He does not, however, deal with the spiral in pre-Columbian America, Polynesia, and China.

Briefly, his view is that somebody invented the spiral while

¹ Quotations from A. Lang's *Custom and Myth* (Chapter on "The Art of Savages", pp. 287 *et seq.*), London, 1910.

working with wire. This man found the design to be a pretty one, and when other craftsmen engaged in the manufacture of pottery, or seal stones, first saw it, they, too, thought it pretty and imitated it. The theory is not a very convincing one. If the spiral was imitated merely because it was "pretty", why was it incised on stone—a very difficult task—so as to be concealed inside the ancient tomb of New Grange on the Boyne, near Drogheda, Ireland? Like the ancient Egyptian tomb picture, this Irish tomb symbol was evidently not intended to make appeal to the living. It was left for the soul alone to admire it and exclaim, "Pretty"!

Perhaps, after all, the Irish tomb spiral had, like the Egyptian tomb picture, a magico-religious value. It may have had—probably it did have—the significance of other so-called ornaments referred to in *Cormac's Glossary*¹ which designates them as *Indelba* (images, symbols) and states:

Indelba was the name applied to the altars of certain idols: these altars were so-called because "they (the pagans) were wont to carve on them the forms (Irish *delba*) of the elements they adored: for example, the figure of the sun".²

Dr. Hall's views on the spiral will be found in his admirable and scholarly work *The Ancient History of the Near East*. My quotations are from the second edition. In the third section of the second chapter,³ he deals with the Early and Middle Minoan periods of Ægean civilization, and, referring to the fine Early Minoan stone vases of Crete and the Cyclades, notes that "on some of them a fully developed system of spiral decoration appears", and continues:

The system of spiral decoration now makes its appearance in Greece, and is seen in the goldwork of Troy and the stonework of the Cyclades perhaps before it appears as a decorative motive on pottery. The origin of the Ægean spiral pattern is probably to be sought in metal working. The "Early Minoan" goldsmith invented it, and we see the first-fruits of his invention in the spiral coils of the gold wire pins of the "Treasure of Priam". From metal the new pattern passed to stonework in relief and then to pottery, painted on the flat.

¹ A work by Archbishop Cormac MacCullenan, King of Cashel, who died in 908 A.D.

² P. W. Joyce. *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*. London, 1906, p. 123.

³ pp. 40-41.

The Egyptians adopted it and incised it on their seals, an example afterwards followed by the makers of the "Cretan seal stones". From the Ægean the beautiful pattern spread northwards to Central Europe, to Scandinavia, and eventually to Celtic Britain.

On Cretan pottery the spiral design does not properly appear till the beginning of the next period of artistic development, the Middle Minoan.

As reference is made to spirals on stone, two examples from Scotland may be referred to (Plate XI, figures II and III). The former is one of the so-called "ornamented stone balls" peculiar to Scotland; this specimen from Aberdeenshire has "projecting discs or knobs" and is of the Iron Age. The latter is a stone from Orkney of uncertain date. These examples serve to show that spirals on stone were not, as some have asserted, "roughly shaped".

Dr. Hall, as quoted above, draws attention to the fact that when the spiral design was adopted by potters "the forms of earthenware vases became for the first time modelled upon those vases of metal". But although this coincidence may be an interesting one, it does not afford proof of Dr. Hall's belief regarding the origin of the spiral. Metal vases were not adorned with spirals and the makers of seal stones did not imitate earlier seals of metal.

It will be seen that Dr. Hall favours the "diffusion" theory, *i.e.* the spread of the spiral from a centre of origin. He traces it from the Ægean area to Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia. His view that it reached Scandinavia before it reached "Celtic Britain" ignores the possibility that it may have been carried to England by sea directly from the Mediterranean.

One can almost hear Mr. Andrew Lang making merry of the Hall diffusion theory in this connexion. He would have tied down Dr. Hall to his Ægean area of origin and set him this "poser":

If the spiral was invented by a Minoan goldsmith who had been experimenting with gold wire, how came the New Zealand spiral into existence? Where and when did the Maori savage obtain gold wire?

Mr. Lang made much of the fact that the Maori was in the "Neolithic phase of culture" when European explorers discovered him and his country. From his own peculiar

view-point he would have been justified in rejecting Dr. Hall's beliefs regarding the origin of the spiral and of its diffusion as an "art motif" by quoting that writer's own words directed at another (an eminent scientist) against himself :

We have no beliefs on these subjects whatever; we consider beliefs about anything relating to the early history of man and the origins and diffusion of Culture to be totally unjustified and unscientific.¹

Dr. Hall's criticism, from which this quotation is taken, was gravely made against the view that the civilization of pre-Columbian America had origin in the Old World. "Let it first be proved to be even a probable theory", he wrote. "It is not yet accepted as such by archæologists."

But archæologists cannot expect to solve the problem of origins if they ignore the beliefs and customs connected with the so-called "art-motifs", not a few of which can be proved to be symbols, and, indeed, are explained as symbols by modern peoples who continue to make use of them.² In this connexion one may quote what Dr. Laufer says regarding Chinese art :

I utterly fail to see of what avail it is to us to build the roof before the ground pillars, of what advantage all these discussions on subjective evolutions of motives, on analysis of style and esthetics of Chinese art will be in the long run, as long as we do not know the solid basis, the meaning and history of the motives, and as long as such phantoms will be easily destroyed by every serious investigation. For certainly not by intuition or opinions derived from a general or vague knowledge of art can we hope to reach the goal, but only by the most absorbed method of research consulting the views, traditions and sentiments of these people who created the monuments which we desire to understand.³

Here we may leave Mr. Lang and Dr. Hall. Both have discussed the spiral without first endeavouring to discover whether or not it meant something to the ancient craftsmen who first made use of it, or whether or not it means anything to the modern peoples who continue to use it.

Professor Elliot Smith's view is that the spiral was not merely an "art motif", but had from the outset a definite

¹ Dr. Hall in *Nature*, January, 24th 1925.

² R. H. Greiner in *Polynesian Decorative Designs* gives much interesting and valuable information in this connexion.

³ *Jade*. Chicago, 1912, p. 20.

significance as a symbol which emanated from a body of religious ideas. He has written at some length on the subject in his *Evolution of the Dragon*¹ and his *Elephants and Ethnologists*.²

Reference has already been made to his views on Houssay's octopus theory in connexion with the swastika. "There can be no doubt", Elliot Smith says, "that the symbolism of the Mycenæan spiral and the volute is closely related to the octopus. In fact, the evidence provided by Minoan paintings and Mycenæan decorative art demonstrates that the spiral

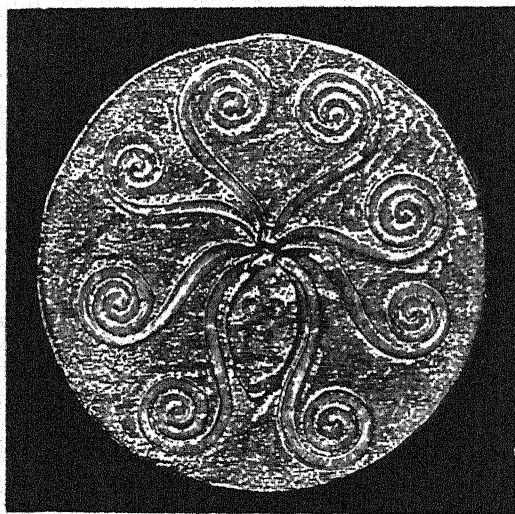


FIG. 27. OCTOPUS IN CONVENTIONALIZED FORM ON A GOLD ORNAMENT, FOUND AT MYCENÆ BY DR. SCHLIEHMANN

as a symbol of life-giving was definitely derived from the octopus. The use of the volute on Egyptian scarabs and also in the decoration of an early Thracian statuette of a nude goddess indicate that it was employed like the spiral and octopus as a life symbol".

Then having considered Siret's view that the spiral-motif of the Ægean gave place to an angular design because of "the

¹ Manchester, 1919, section "The Swastika", pp. 173 *et seq.*

² London, 1924. Chap. IV, "The Spiral Ornament", pp. 83 *et seq.*

influence of the conventional Egyptian way of representing water", he proceeds :

Whatever explanation may be provided of this method of representing the arms of the octopus with its angularly bent extremities, it seems to have an important bearing on Houssay's hypothesis of the swastika's origin. For it would reveal the means by which the spiral or volute shape of the limbs of the swastika became transformed into the angular form which is so characteristic of the conventional symbol.

He points out (p. 98) that in China the spiral is a thunder symbol, quoting in this connexion the Chinese writer Ko Hung, who says that "a spiral denotes the rolling of thunder from which issues a flash of lightning". To explain the origin of this specialization, he refers to Cook's *Zeus* (pp. 346 *et seq*) and says :¹

In Egypt the god Amen was identified with the ram ; and this creature's spirally curved horn became the symbol of the thunder god throughout the Mediterranean area, and then further afield in Europe, Africa and Asia, where, for instance, we see Agni's ram with the characteristic horn. The blending of the influence of the octopus- and the ram's-horn-motifs made the spiral a conventional representation of thunder. This is displayed in its most definite form in China, Japan, Indonesia, and America, where we find the separate spiral used as a thunder symbol, and the spiral appendage on the side of the head as a token of the god of thunder.

That the influence of Egyptian culture, and therefore of Egyptian symbolism, an essential element in that culture, operated in the Aegean area and Western Asia, there can no longer be any doubt. But the influence of Amen (or Amon) was not operative during the early period when the spiral first came into fashion. "Amon", was, as Professor Breasted reminds us, an "old obscure local god of Thebes, whose name is not to be found in the great religious documents of the earlier age like the Pyramid Texts". It was not until the Empire Age that he "gained the chief place in the state theology, owing to the supreme position held by the ruling family of his native town in the Empire".² Nor did the Theban god become

¹ *Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 178.

² *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 318.

chief deity until after he had been fused with the sun god Re, as Amon-Re (or Amen-Ra). "This supremacy", Breasted reminds us, "was not confined to theological theory. Economically and administratively Amon actually received the first place among the gods. For the first time in the history of the country (Egypt) the great organizer, Thutmose III, seems to have merged the priesthoods of all the temples of the land into one great sacerdotal organization at the head of which he placed the High Priest of Amon. This is the earliest national priesthood as yet known in the early East, and the first *pontifex maximus*. This Amonite papacy constituted a powerful political obstacle in the way of realizing the supremacy of the ancient sun-god". Thutmose III died in March, 1447 B.C. The cult of the ram-headed god and the characteristic incurvated horns of the god reached Western Asia and Eastern Europe long centuries after the spiral had been in use. That the ram's horn motif may have exercised an influence in making the spiral a symbol of thunder in China is not, in the writer's opinion, convincing. It will be shown that in China the spiral as the "thunder roll", had a deeper significance than an isolated native text may reveal.

China derived not a few beliefs connected with the spiral and thunder from India, as De Visser has shown in his *The Dragon in China and Japan*. As plausible as the Amon-horn-spiral theory is another which might be urged—that the "thunder spiral" was first suggested in India by the peacock, which in Sanskrit literature is associated with thunder and rain. Professor Monier Williams¹ wrote in this connexion :

The Indian peacock is very restless at the approach of the rains, in which it is observed to take delight. Its *circular movements* are a frequent subject of allusion with Hindu poets, and are often by them compared to dancing ; thus *S'akuntalā* Act IV, "The peacock on the lawn ceases its dance". *Meghadūta* (l. 215) : "Pleased on each terrace, dancing with delight, the friendly peacock hails thy grateful flight." *Mālati-Mādhava* (p. 108) : "As pleased the peafowl hails the bow of heaven" etc.

In the Nala poem, the hero drives his car so furiously that it sounds like "a cloud that hoarsely thunders at the coming of the rains". Even animals are deceived.

¹ *Story of Nala : An Episode of the Mahābhārata*. Oxford, 1879, p. 278.

On the palace-roofs the peacocks, th' elephants within their stalls,
And the horses heard the rolling of the mighty monarch's car.

Elephants and peacocks hearing the fleet chariot rattling on,
Up they raised their necks and clamoured, as at sound of coming rain.¹

In America, the turkey, and in Europe, the pheasant were similarly connected with thunder and rain. These birds appear to have acquired a reputation as rain-bringers on account of their restless movements, especially when a thunder-storm was at hand. During the Great War the pheasants in English country districts made known to human beings by their movements when fighting was taking place in the North Sea, or bombing airships were approaching.

The spiral design did not, however, originate either in India or elsewhere as a symbol of the "peacock's rain dance," which is a spiral movement. But importance was evidently attached to the bird, because of its habits, by observers to whom the spiral already possessed a definite significance, and they regarded the peacock as a rain-bringer and thunder-maker which performed the appropriate magical spiral movement.

Nor, in the writer's opinion, did the spiral originate either because a Minoan goldsmith discovered that gold wire could be wound in spiral fashion, or because it was observed that the octopus in sleep curves its tentacles so as to form spirals. The Minoan goldsmith evidently found wire suitable for making spirals, and the octopus may have been regarded as sacred chiefly because of its habit referred to. But long before wire was twisted into spirals, the magico-religious spiral had come into use.

There are spirals on pre-dynastic Egyptian pottery and a spiral on a pre-dynastic stone amulet (figure 28). Many centuries before the Minoan goldsmiths

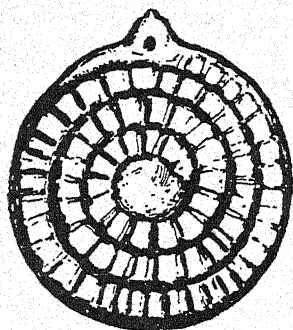


FIG. 28.

PREDYNASTIC EGYPTIAN
STONE AMULET, PERFORATED
FOR SUSPENSION, WITH
INCISED SPIRAL (after Petrie)

¹ *Story of Nala: An Episode of the Mahābhārata*. Oxford, 1879, p. 137.

produced spirals in wire, the spiral symbol adorned the crown of the Pharaoh of Lower Egypt (figure 29*a* and *b*). After the Two Lands were united, the crown of Upper Egypt (figure 29*c*) was combined with that of Lower Egypt and the spiral symbol was retained (figure 29*d*).

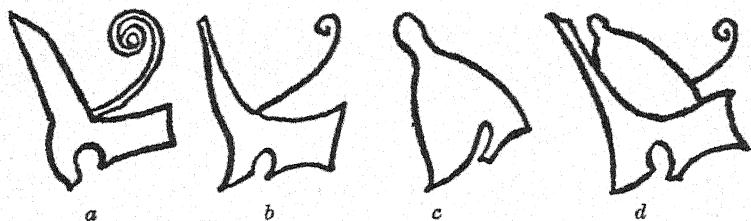


FIG. 29. CROWNS OF LOWER AND UPPER EGYPT WITH SPIRAL SYMBOL

When the Ægean goldsmith began to twist his wire, there was evidently a psychological motive for his action, and the same may be said of other early and late craftsmen who selected the spiral as an arbitrary design for seal stones, for religious or magico-religious objects and for blocks of stone intended for the dark interiors of tombs. That the spiral had a meaning which was not entirely lost in early Christian times is suggested by the prominence given to it on the richly designed cross on a Scottish sculptured stone (Plate VII). In this case it would appear that the symbol was used to illustrate the regenerating and sustaining power of Christ and the gospel.

SECTION II

WHIRLPOOLS AND WHIRLWINDS

Spiral as expression of ideas—Motion associated with Life—The heart as seat of Life—The womb of nature—Palaeolithic paintings, etc., in deep caves—Caves as "wind holes"—Belief that Life was in sky—Sky as source of wind and water—Water as source of Energy—The Whirlpool enclosing embryo—Whirlpools in ancient religions—Zuni myth—Birth of Aphrodite—Whirlpool Dragons—Whirlpool as "gate" of Dragon's palace—Dragon-lake whirlpool—Sumerian Sea-serpent goddess—Whirlwind lore—Typhon and Echidna—Fairies, nereids, demons and gods in whirlwinds—Maori ghosts carried to sky by whirlwinds—Early Pharaoh ascends to sky on wind—Japanese whirlwinds as "dragon rolls"—Dragons cause whirlwinds—Chinese coiled and revolving dragons—Chinese "red ball" problem—Ball, sun, moon, thunder and pearl as spirals—Flat and ascending spirals—Chinese spiral and Yang matter.

Ancient religious art invariably expressed something by means of its symbols. It would be rash therefore to assume that the spiral was an exception to this rule. All symbols did not originate in the same way. Some were conventionalized natural subjects, or conventionalized living creatures, or simply characteristic features of these objects or creatures, such as a leaf or branch representative of a tree, the horns of an animal like the ram or deer, the wings of a sacred bird like those of the falcon in the Egyptian "winged disc", or merely a feather of a bird, or the impression of a "bee's foot" to convey the idea of the presence of a god, as a Buddha footprint conveys to Buddhists the feeling that Buddha is present. Thus in an Egyptian magical papyrus, translated by Birch (which is not older than the XXVIth Dynasty), occurs the following :

Tefnut changes her shape into a club of four *spithams* (long) inside of this place. . . Shu takes the shape of an eagle's wing.¹

Symbols like the cross and swastika were not, however imitative—the result of direct observation of Nature in the sense that a wing or horn symbol was; they were rather

¹ *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI, p. 119.

expressions of ideas regarding natural phenomena, natural processes.

The spiral, on the other hand, was certainly imitative. It is found in nature, as we have seen, for certain climbing plants ascend supports in spiral fashion, certain shells are of spiral shape, and there are waterspouts, whirlwinds and whirlpools. That the various spirals were associated with one another is suggested by the old Gaelic word *faochag* (Irish, *faochog*), which signifies a periwinkle, or a small whirlpool on a running

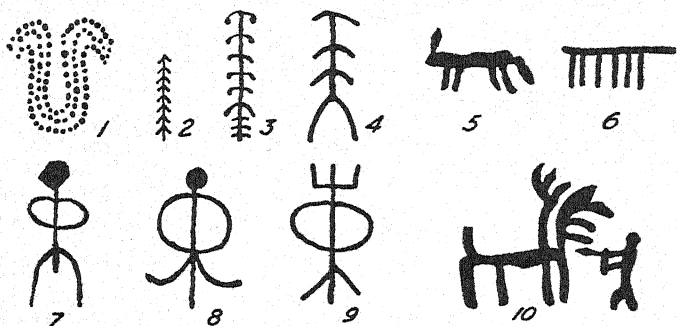


FIG. 30. AZILIAN SYMBOLS (after Breuil)

No. 1 is evidently the Egyptian double-headed serpent symbol of the united "Two Lands"; 2 may be a tree symbol, but 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 are human beings; 6 is a symbol of a people who could produce 5. In 10 the deer is even more conventionalised than the human figure.

stream, and is also one of the names of the eye. The Sanskrit word *Kapardin* is used in connexion with two Vedic deities *Rudra* and *Pushan*, who are said "to wear their hair wound or braided spirally upwards into the form of a shell".¹

As the "Upper Palæolithic" people in Western Europe made a magico-religious use of shells and inaugurated in their art the use of the spiral, it may be that the shell spiral came first. As shells evidently meant much to these people, who used them so freely in their ceremonial burials, it would be rash to assume that the imitative spiral design meant nothing at all to them.

In the process of time, and especially after the introduction of the agricultural mode of life, the symbolism of the spiral appears to have grown more complex. Climbing plants, whirlwinds and whirlpools and waterspouts arrested attention, as did also other natural spirals. Ultimately, as the evidence

¹ Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, V, 462.

passed under review in this chapter suggests, the spiral referred to a natural process which the ancient thinkers and observers believed they had detected when pondering over the mysteries of the universe and attempting to solve a problem after it had been discovered, as Elliot Smith has reminded us in another connexion, that there was a problem to solve.

These ancient thinkers associated movement with life. Rivers were in constant motion, and water was, as "water of life", something more to them than H_2O . The air was in motion, and human beings and animals were refreshed and stimulated by the "air of life", and especially by favourable winds from certain points of the compass. The heavenly bodies performed regular movements, rising and setting, or revolving constantly in the sky. After the introduction of the agricultural mode of life, men took a very special interest in the heavenly bodies as measures of time—of days and nights, of the months, the seasons and the year.

In Palæolithic times, ideas regarding life appear to have been connected chiefly with human beings and animals. Reptiles were rare in Western Europe and vegetation scarce and uninteresting, as may be gathered from the study of Palæolithic art. It was known even to Cro-Magnon man that the heart

was the seat and centre of life, as is indicated by the fact that he painted a great heart on the body of a mammoth, and incised on representations of other animals spears or darts directed towards the heart.

It seemed natural to the early thinkers that the living universe had a heart—a centre of life—and that all the manifestations of life were connected with it. We do not know to what extent Cro-Magnon man indulged in speculation

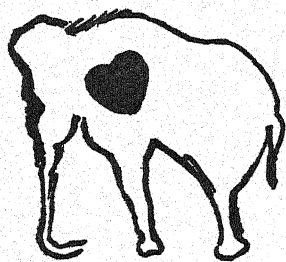


FIG. 31.
MAMMOTH PAINTING
(after Breuil)

in this connexion. He appears, however, to have had a definite conception of natural energy—that is, of magic—for he performed magical ceremonies, including magical dances, and it is probable he had formulated some concrete idea regarding the source of magic or natural energy. In this connexion he appears to have attached importance to caves,

regarding them apparently as wombs, and by drawing pictures in these, and especially in their deepest recesses, he may have believed he was creating "power" at the source of birth. Burials in caves and in clefts of rock may have been originally connected with the idea that all living beings were children of Mother Earth. A passage in the Hindu religious work, *Vishnu Purana*, may be an interesting survival of the Palæolithic concept :

It (the world) was (at the beginning) like Mount Meru ; the mountains were the womb, and the seas were the uterine fluids of that vast [production].

Others, besides the Hindus, who were inheritors of ancient concepts, appear to have perpetuated the idea that mountain caves were the source of "power" in its various manifestations. The winds were supposed to have had origin in caves. Roseoe writing regarding certain Central African rain-makers, informs us in this connexion :

On a hill on which was the sacred place of one of these rain-makers, there was a hole from which the man affirmed that the gusts of wind which frequently accompanied rain proceeded.

Again, dealing with sacred hills, he writes :

The hill Kahola was sacred because it was the home of a special earth-spirit, and offerings were made there for which the king sent regularly a black and a white sheep. On the hill was a crater which went very far down, the sides being covered with grass and shrubs and ending in a lake. A sheep was thrown alive into this lake and a fowl killed and thrown in. It was said that the sheep always came out alive for it followed a passage which led from the side of the crater through the hill to the outside and which was known only to the guardian of the hill, a freeholder (*Mutaka*) and medicine-man, who took possession of the animal. This hill was a favourite place for people who wished to make requests for prosperity, for children, or for rain."²

The Chinese believed that their life-giving, year-renewing dragons issued from the womb of the earth :

Holes in the ground, due to volcanic eruptions and emitting smoke, were thought to be the spots from where dragons

¹ Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV, 42.

² Canon John Roscoe. *The Bakitara*, Cambridge, 1923, pp. 31, 44.

which had been lying in the earth had dashed forth and flown to heaven.¹

That the Cro-Magnon people believed in a Mother goddess—perhaps, an Earth goddess—is suggested by their “Venus” figures with the female parts exaggerated, while the cave imprints of hands with mutilated fingers indicate that the idea of sacrifice was not unknown to them.

The early agriculturists, who discovered the cardinal points and connected them with the seasons, had, however, a wider range of vision than the early hunters. Their mode of life, as has been emphasized, made it necessary that they should measure time. When their Calendar was introduced, it was first connected with the moon and stars, and it was subsequently connected with the sun. The heavenly bodies not only measured time for the agriculturists, but appeared also to exercise a very intimate influence on plant life and on the supply of water as nourishment for crops. The belief consequently arose that life was in the sky—that the “heart” of the Universe was pulsating somewhere in the firmament, and that, further, the “water of life” and the “air of life” had their sources in the sky. As will be shown, the idea ultimately emerged that life in the sky emanated from what the Hindus know as “Divine Cosmic Energy,” symbolized by Kundalini, the coiled serpent—a spiral.

My view that this Hindu concept is a survival from early agricultural times has been arrived at after giving consideration to certain ceremonies and texts connected with early religion, and a large body of significant ideas connected with natural and imitative spirals.

Water and wind were to the early agriculturist of fundamental importance as life-givers and life-sustainers. The beliefs and customs connected with those natural spirals, the whirlpools and whirlwinds, should therefore first be dealt with.

In ancient India, as in ancient Egypt, it was believed that water was a source of energy—that water conveyed energy to man and the world from its source in the sky, an idea which evidently had origin after the introduction of the agricultural mode of life. The crops, it was observed, derived their energy, manifested by growth, from life-giving water, and their sap

¹ De Visser. *The Dragon in China and Japan*, Amsterdam, 1913, pp. 112-113.

was "water of life." In a section of the Hindu sacred work the *Satapatha Brahmana*,¹ which deals with the ceremonial use of water, it is said of the priest :

He collects (various kinds of) water. The reason why he collects water is that—water being vigour—he thereby collects vigour, the essence of the waters.

The priest takes water from rivers, wells, dew-ponds, etc., and when he takes water from a whirlpool, it is stated explicitly that :

the waters (of the whirlpool) enclose the offspring (embryo) ; he (the priest who sprinkled) thus makes him (the king) the offspring of the people.

To understand what the "embryo" meant to the ancient Hindu thinkers, reference must be made to their creation myths.

It is set forth in the *Rigveda* (x, 82) that the primordial water "contained that earliest embryo in which all the gods were collected".

Another hymn (x, 121) states :

When the great waters pervaded the universe, containing an embryo, and generating fire, thence arose the one spirit (*Asu*) of the gods.

The *Atharva-veda* (4, 2, 6) says :

In the beginning, the waters . . . protected (covered ?) the universe, containing an embryo ; over these divine (waters) was the god.

The eighth verse states :

In the beginning the waters, producing a child, brought forth an embryo, which, as it was coming into life, was enveloped in a golden covering.

In the *Rigveda* (x, 72) occurs the passage :

When, O gods, ye moved, strongly agitated, on that water, there a violent dust issued forth from you as from dancers.

Another reference to wind in the same hymn is :

As a blacksmith blows up a fire with the bellows, so he created them (the gods).²

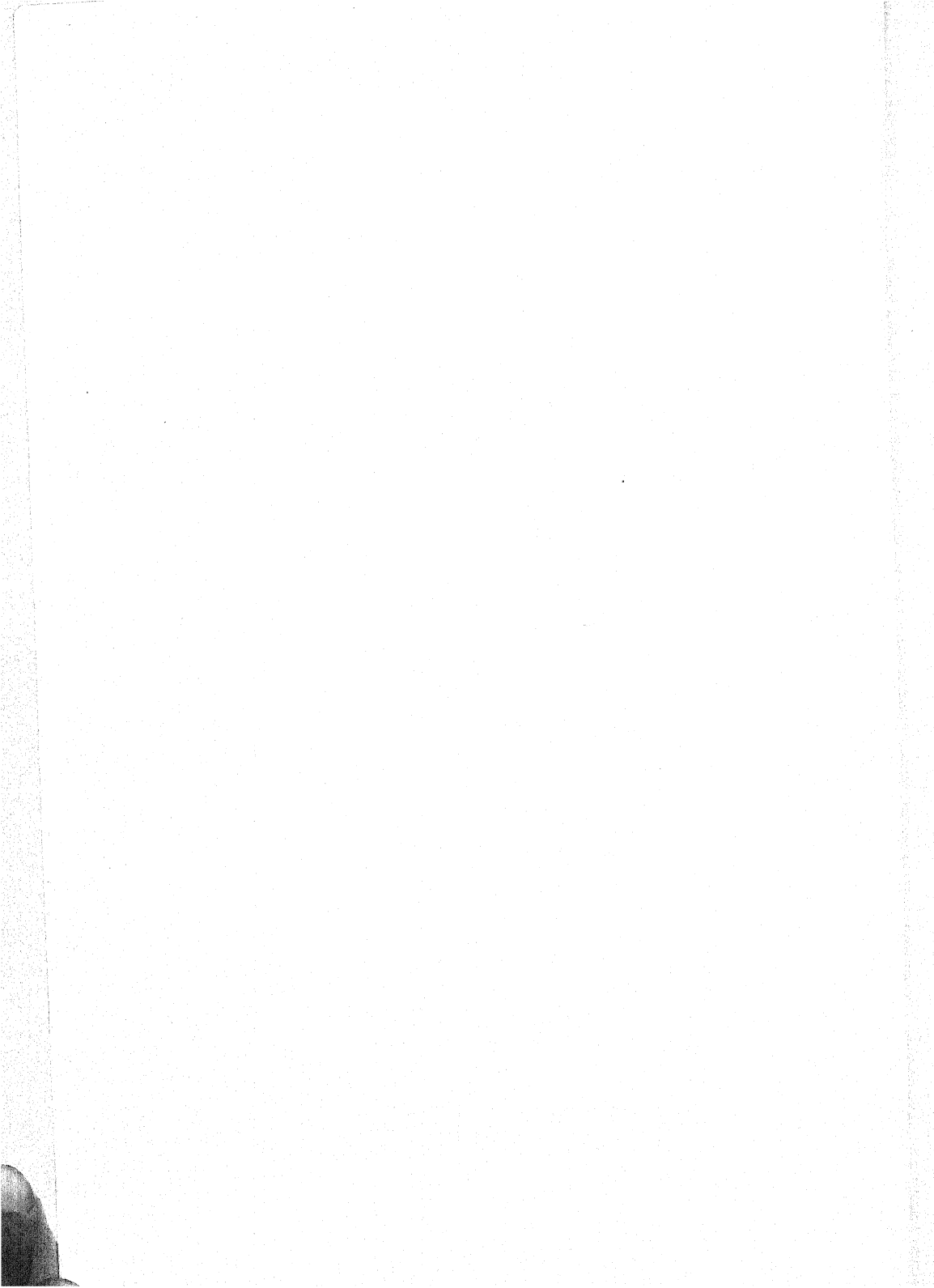
¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLI, Book V, pp. 73 *et seq.*

² Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, IV, 17, *et seq.*



SCOTTISH CROSS WITH SPIRAL.

(After Stuart.)



The whirlpool of the primordial deep contained the embryo. In the *Rigveda* (x, 92, 5) the god Rudra is referred to "as putting the waters in motion", and it is significant to find references to his "spirally-braided hair"—braided in shell-spiral form.¹ Rudra was a storm god—a whirlwind-riding god.

Ultimately the "embryo" was identified with the egg and lotus. But the idea that life began in the first whirlpool, or came from the whorled shell which was connected with the whirlpool because of its spiral form, was perpetuated, and was as widespread as it was persistent. As in Gaelic, the shell and whirlpool were regarded as manifestations of the same life-giving force, which was symbolized by the imitative spiral in religious art.

As will be shown, the whirlpool has in Scandinavian mythology the same significance as it has in Hindu mythology: it was regarded as a manifestation of the source of natural energy—of life and magic. In Scotland the whirlpool of Corryvreckan is found to have been connected with the goddess of winter, one of whose names is Englished Beira.

According to Hesiod, Aphrodite had origin from whirling water. The severed limbs of Saturn were flung into the sea and drifted afar:

Till now *swift-circling* a white foam arose
From that immortal substance, and a maid
Was nourish'd in the midst. The wafting waves
First bore her to Cythera's heaven-blessed coast;
Then reach'd she Cyprus, girt with flowing seas,
And forth emerged a goddess, beautiful
In modesty. Green herbage sprang around
Beneath her slender feet. Her gods and men
Name Aphrodite, goddess of the foam,
Since in the sea-foam nourished.²

The whirlpool figures in New World as in Old World Mythology. A Zuni myth tells how the World-mother created life from her "terraced bowl". The bowl was filled with water which she caused to whirl round so that life might be produced.

She took a great terraced bowl into which she poured water; upon the water she spat, and whipping it rapidly with

¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 400.

² Hesiod, *The Theogony*, lines 250-263 (C. A. Elton's translation. London, 1894, pp. 105-6).

her fingers, it was soon beaten into foam as froths the soap-weed, and the foam rose high around the rim of the bowl. The Earth mother blew the foam. Flake after flake broke off, and, bursting, cast spray downward into the bowl. "See", said she, "this bowl is, as it were, the world, the rim its furthest limits, and the foam-bound terraces round about my features, which they shall call mountains. . . . Since white clouds shall rise, float away, and, bursting, shed spray, that my children may drink the water of life, and from my substance add unto the flesh of their being."¹

A foam cap floating on the water is fertilized by the sun and the first twin children are born from it. The early whirlpool concept is here in its solarized form.

In Indonesia, as we find in Mr. W. J. Perry's review of the collected evidence, a similar myth obtains :

It happened one day that the south wind was blowing, so that a large mass of foam was carried by the waves and finally left high and dry on the shore. Day after day the sun shone upon the foam, till it began to move and work itself deeper into the sand. Finally it gave birth to a youth.

This youth afterwards married a girl who "had sweated out of a stone". When he found her he saw that her navel string was still attached to the stone, and he cut it with a bamboo knife.²

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Earth, the ample-bosomed, first produces the Heaven.

Then, with Heaven
Consorting, Ocean from her bosom burst
With its *deep-eddy* waters . . .
To Ocean Tethys brought the rivers forth
In *whirlpool* waters roll'd : Eridanus
Deep-eddied, and Alpheus, and the Nile :
And the divine Scamander.³

De Visser, dealing with Chinese myths regarding the origin of amber and a magical perfume, tells that the former is said to originate from Dragon's blood and the latter from dragon's saliva. In the *Yiu hwan ki wen*, a work written in the Sung dynasty, the saliva is supposed to come from dragons living "in whirlpools in the open sea". De Visser continues :

¹ Cushing, *Zuni Breadstuff* (Indian Notes and Monographs, Vol. VIII, New York, 1920, pp. 23-24).

² *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*, p. 78.

³ Elton's translation, pp. 102-117.

The spittle which they (the whirlpool dragons) emitted was hardened by the sun, and these hard pieces were blown ashore by the wind. When fresh, it was white, gradually it became purple, and finally black (amber, generally considered to be the excrements of cachalots, i.e., sperm whales, is yellowish).¹

Whirlpools are connected with dragons in Japanese dragon lore. De Visser gives a legend from a native work in which reference is made to "a well-known whirlpool, called *Uwa no Naruto*, the Sounding door (i.e., eddy) of Uwa, between Shikoku and Awaji, which was said to be the Eastern Gate of the Dragon-palace". A ship is caught in this whirlpool and "turned about for three days". Offerings were made to the Dragon god, but his anger was not appeased until a woman who was being abducted was placed in a boat.

As soon as they had done this, the ship was at once driven out of the whirlpool and disappeared in a western direction.²

Another legend tells of a Japanese Buddhist priest who went in a boat to the middle of a sacred lake and placed on the water, as an offering to the dragon-god, a new wooden bowl containing "red rice". On the priest and boatman returning to the shore,

they heard a sound as of a whirlpool on the spot where the offering had been made, and the bowl disappeared under the water.³

A Japanese serpent-god of a river caused a whirlwind, so that it might submerge calabashes, as the dragon whirlpool submerged the rice bowl.⁴

Dr. Langdon appears to have resuscitated an ancient Sumerian whirlpool goddess. This is *Iš-ḫa-ra* of Ur. She is one of the virgin goddesses beloved by Tammuz, and in a text, it is stated :

her name is written twice with the ordinary sign for lamb, *puḫadu*, and once with a sign *nigin*, which means "turn, twist".

Dr. Langdon adds : "The latter writing refers, of course, to her ancient connexion with the sea-serpent

¹ *The Dragon in China and Japan*, p. 97.

² De Visser, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-5.

³ De Visser, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁴ De Visser, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

Through the ancient connexion with water, one of the principle elements of incantation, she must have been much invoked in magic. . . . A symbol called the *bašmu*, or viper, represented her in a temple".¹

The whirlwind, like the whirlpool, was regarded as a manifestation of natural energy. Winds—the air of life—might emanate from various points—the north, south, east or west—but the whirlwind embraced all winds; it “boxed the compass”. To the early agriculturist it was apparently regarded as energy, force, vigour emanating from a centre—a manifestation of the birth of energy, an indication that energy had origin in a centre. The whirlwind was consequently associated with supernatural beings—with the Paradise from which life originally came, and to which the rulers departed after life on earth was ended, as King Arthur, Ossian, Thomas the Rhymer and other famous heroes departed to the fairyland Paradise either in the Underworld, or the Isles of the Blest.

Typhon, the serpent-dragon and giant, who made war against Heaven, was in one of his aspects a mighty whirlwind. His bride was Echidna, a fair girl in the upper part of her body, but a coiled and speckled serpent below the waist. She had come into being from the union of Chrysaor and Calliroe, the daughter of Oceanus, and was pent in a deep cavern beneath the rocks of Arima—another “wind hole”—the source of winds. Hesiod tells, in his *Theogony*,²

That with the jet-eyed maid Tiphæon mixed
His fierce embrace; a whirlwind rude and wild.

Echidna gave birth to Orthos, Geryon, Cerberus (the dog of Hades), the Hydra (octopus-demon) and Chimæra (lion, goat and serpent complex).

There is much widespread lore regarding the association of supernatural beings with whirling gusts of wind. According to Scottish Highland belief the fairies and other supernatural beings travel on spiral gusts. Campbell of Tیره³ writes in this connexion:

In this climate the eddies are among the most curious of natural phenomena. On calm summer days they go past,

¹ *Tammuz and Ishtar*, pp. 125-6.

² Elton's translation, pp. 114-5.

³ *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, pp. 24, 25.

whirling above straws and dust, and as not another breath of air is moving at the time their cause is sufficiently puzzling. In Gaelic the eddy is known as "the people's puff of wind", and its motion "travelling on tall grass stems". By throwing one's *left shoe* at it, the fairies are made to drop whatever they may be taking away—men, women, children, or animals. . . . In these eddies, people going on a journey at night have been "lifted", and spent the night careering through the skies. On returning to earth, though they came to the house last left, they were too stupefied to recognize either the house or its inmates. . . . Even in daylight some were carried in the Elfin eddy from one island to another. . . .

During the early spring when, according to the folk-lore connected with the Gaelic calendar, the forces of evil and good are struggling for supremacy, there are three days called "The Eddy winds of the storm month".

Campbell writes regarding these :¹

The appearance of spring is now to be seen, but the bad weather is not yet past. The worst weather comes back occasionally, and there are fewer gusts of wind, uncertain in their coming and duration, that well deserve the name of "Eddy winds from February".

In Greece the nereids travel through the air as do the Scottish fairies. A modern investigator² has gleaned significant evidence in this connexion and writes :

The habit of travelling on a whirlwind, or more correctly perhaps of stirring up a whirlwind by rapid passage has gained for the nymphs in some districts secondary names which might seem to constitute a new class of wood nymphs.

In Athens whirlwinds are said to occur most frequently near the old Hill of the Nymphs ; and women of the lower class, as they see the spinning spiral of dust approach, fall to crossing themselves busily and to repeating, "Honey and milk in your path" ! This incantation is widely known as an effective safeguard against the Nereids in their rapid flight, and must in origin, it would seem, have been a vow.

Lawson notes that the Greek Fates, like the Scottish fairies, spin and weave for human beings and that "a golden spindle is specially assigned to nereids".³ The spiral movement of the

¹ *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* Glasgow, 1902, p. 251.

² J. G. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*. Cambridge, 1910, p. 150.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 134.

spindle which gives "birth" to thread had apparently not been overlooked.

In the Bible the whirlwind is referred to both in the poetical sense—"He shall take them away as with a whirlwind"¹—and in the old symbolical sense, as in the following passages :

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.²

Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind.³

The Lord shall roar from on high. . . . Evil shall go forth from nation to nation and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.⁴

The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.⁵

And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning : and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with the whirlwinds of the south.⁶

In Ezekiel the whirlwind and gods of the cardinal points are connected in the symbolism of the first chapter :

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire ; also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance ; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet ; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot : and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. . . . Their wings were joined one to another ; they turned not when they went ; they went every-one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the faces of a man and the face of a lion on the right side ; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side ; they four also had the face of an eagle. . . . Their appearance was like burning coals of fire . . . and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. . . . Now, as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces . . .

¹ Psalm LVIII, 9.

² Job XXXVIII, 1, XL, 6.

³ Jeremiah XXIII, 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XXV, 30-32.

⁵ Nahum I, 3.

⁶ Zechariah IX, 14.

and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. . . . And their rings were full of eyes round about them four . . . and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up . . . for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. . . . And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. . . . I heard the noise of wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty. . . . And above the firmament that was above their heads was the likeness of a throne . . . and upon the throne the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it . . . and I heard the voice of one that spoke and he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee . . . I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me . . .

The belief that supernatural beings travelled in whirlwinds has been traced in various parts of the world. A number of examples are given by Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*¹ :

When a gust lifts the hay in the meadow, the Breton peasant throws a knife or a fork at it to prevent the devil from carrying off the hay. Similarly in the Esthonian island of Oesel, when the reapers are busy among the corn and the wind blows about the ears that have not yet been tied into sheaves, the reapers slash at it with their sickles. The custom of flinging a knife or a hat at a whirlwind is observed alike by German, Slavonian and Esthonian rustics; they think that a witch or wizard is riding on the blast, and that the knife, if it hits the witch, will be reddened by her blood or will disappear altogether, sticking in the wound it has inflicted. Some Esthonian peasants run shrieking and shouting behind a whirlwind, hurling sticks and stones into the flying dust. The Lengua Indians of the Grand Chaco ascribe the rush of a whirlwind to the passage of a spirit and they fling sticks at it to frighten it away. . . . Of the Bedouins of Eastern Africa it is said that "no whirlwind ever sweeps across the path without being pursued by a dozen savages with drawn creeses, who stab into the centre of the dusty column in order to drive away the evil spirit that is believed to be riding on the blast."

"A blast from Hell" is how an early Christian scribe in Ireland referred to the wind which carried Cuchullin back to his native land in the night-time when he was seen riding in

¹ *The Magic Art*, Vol. I, pp. 329 (1911 edition).

his chariot across the sky. Keats had heard of the belief that supernatural beings ride on the wind :

Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from fairyland,
Of haggard seeming.¹

Odin, Dietrich of Berne, Charlemagne, King Arthur and others figure as the Wild Huntsman in the Raging Host. The sound of horse's hoofs are heard in mid-air, according to the tales, and men catch glimpses by night of the god or ghostly hero riding his black steed and pursuing the stag as of old.

The Ainu of Japan, like the Greeks and Celts, regard the "little whirlwinds" that "play among the trees of the forest during the summer months" as carriers of supernatural beings.

The Ainu imagine . . . these to be filled with demons, and they therefore fear them. They say that when one is seen approaching, the best thing is to hide behind a tree or bush till it has safely passed by. And while in hiding one should expectorate profusely, in order to drive the demons away.

The whirlwind "is sometimes called *Chiukopoyerera* or 'twisted wind', and sometimes *Wenrera*, or 'bad wind'".

In some parts of India the whirlwind-carried supernatural beings are supposed, Sir James Frazer notes, "to be *bhuts* going to bathe in the Ganges". Similar beliefs obtain in Central and South Africa. The Rev. Lorimer Fison informed Sir James Frazer by letter that "once when a great Fijian chief died, a whirlwind swept across the lagoon. An old man who saw it covered his mouth with his hand and said in an awestruck whisper, 'There goes his spirit'!" Californian Indians regard the whirlwinds as the vehicles of souls "ascending to the happy land".³

In his review of Indonesian beliefs and customs Mr. W. J. Perry says that, in one of the tales of "half men" it is told that "the child of a sky-being and an Ingorot woman is divided into two boys. The sharp thunder is the voice of the boy who was taken up to the sky ; when he went up *whirling like fire*

¹ *The Eve of St. Agnes*, stanza, XXXIX.

² Rev. John Batchelor, *The Ainu and Their Folk-Lore*. London, 1901, pp. 385, 593.

³ Stephen Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 328, quoted by Sir James Frazer *op. cit.*, p. 331, n2.

the lightning originated; the voice of the other boy is the rolling thunder".¹

The Maori of New Zealand, like the ancient Egyptians, believed that certain souls ascended to the sky world and that others descended to the underworld. Mr. Elsdon Best writes in this connexion²:

These spirits of the dead, having crossed the vast ocean to the red west, finally reach the ancient home-land of the Maori race, the land of Irihia, and there, at Hawaika-nui, they separate. Those who sympathize with the Earth Mother pass down the long descent known as Taheke-roa to the underworld those who sympathize with Rangi the Sky-Parent ascend by means of the gyrating whirlwind to the heavens, and so pass upwards to the uppermost heaven where dwells Io-matua (Io the parent), and are there welcomed by the company of celestial maids, the twelve mareikura.

Among the pre-Dynastic beliefs enshrined in the Pyramid Texts of Ancient Egypt is one of very special interest and significance:

King Unis goes to the sky, King Unis goes to the sky!
On the wind! On the wind!³

The reference is evidently to a whirlwind which draws skyward the loose desert sand, etc.

The spiral lore of China and Japan is rich and of complex character. As has been noted, the spiral is in China a thunder symbol, but it was that chiefly because of its association with the dragon, the rain bringer which is supposed to slumber all the winter—the season of drought in China—and become active in the spring. De Visser, in his *The Dragon in China and Japan*⁴ shows that the spiral was connected with whirlwinds:

The whirlwinds, called in Japan *tatsu-maki* or "dragon-rolls", which form water spouts and carry heavy objects into the air, were looked upon as dragons winding their way to the sky amidst thunder and rain.⁵

¹ *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*. Manchester, and London, 1918, p. 130.

² *Maori Myth and Religion* (Dominion Museum Monograph No. 1). Wellington, New Zealand, 1922, pp. 16-17.

³ Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 110.

⁴ Amsterdam, 1913.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

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In China "hurricanes and whirlwinds are", De Visser says, "all ascribed to ascending dragons".¹

The Chinese were wont to worship images of coiled dragons so as to bring rain.² When a dragon appeared in the shape of a reptile, it assumed a spiral form :

According to the *Yin-yang tsah tsu*, wind, rain and thunder were caused by a dragon, which in the shape of a white reptile had wound itself around one of the legs of a horse, when this was bathed in a river. The creature had coiled itself so tightly, that the horse lost much blood.³

Dragons appeared before the birth of great men. In the biography of the famous Chinese Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (B.C. 140-87) ascribed to a writer who died in 92 A.D., it is told that his royal father and the ladies of the harem "saw a red dragon *coiling and revolving* between the rafters. The Emperor King called a diviner, the Old Yao by name, and asked him about the matter. The old man said : 'This is a lucky omen. This corridor certainly will produce a man who shall rule the world. He shall expel the barbarians and thus bring with him lucky omens' ".⁴

A revolving dragon might also be a calamity sign. The following extract refers to the fate of an Emperor of the tenth century of our era who during a campaign neglected to take certain ceremonial precautions when he reached his stopping place :

That evening a big star fell before his tent, and on the day *sin-szš*, when he captured the castle of Tan-tsž, the Emperor saw a yellow dragon coiling and winding, about one mile in length. The brightness of its light blinded the eye ; it entered the Imperial lodging house. There was a purple, black vapour which hid the sky, remained the whole day, and then dispersed. That very day the Emperor died.⁵

A similar story is told of a Chinese rebel leader :

When Wen-piao was going to plot his rebellion and, still being engaged in preparing it, had not yet settled (his plans), one of his followers dreamt at night that a dragon was

¹ Amsterdam 1913, p. 233.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

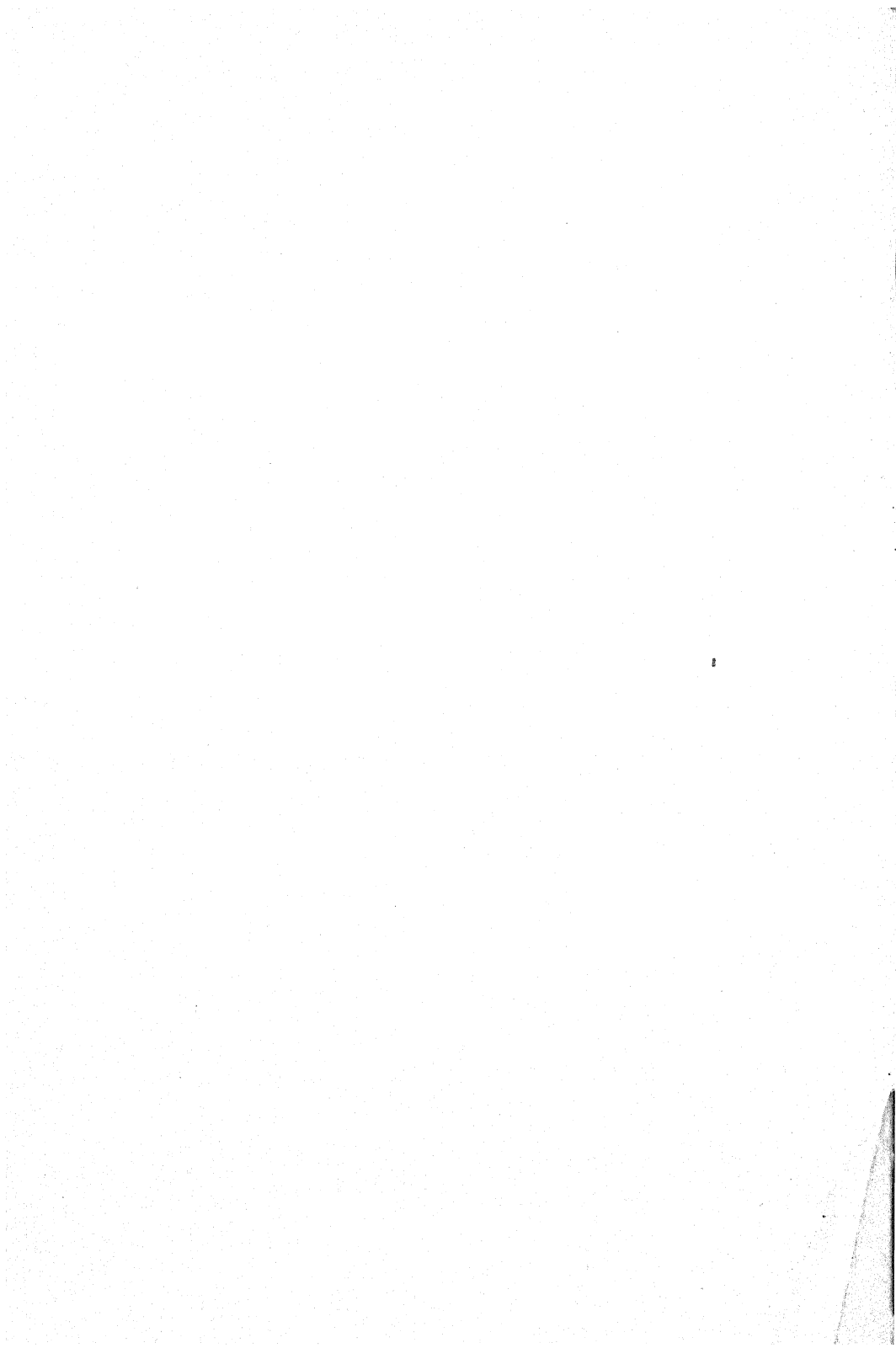
⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

PLATE VIII



Hygieia, goddess of health, with serpent forming a spiral round her body and receiving food from her. She was the daughter of Æsculapius, the Egyptian Imhotep.

(face p. 80.)



coiling above Wen-piao's chin. Wen-piao was very much rejoiced and said: 'This is Heaven's appointment' (to the Throne, i.e., it is a sign that I shall ascend the Throne). Then he settled his plans, raised troops, and was defeated. Men of knowledge said: "As the dragon is a divine being and yet came out of his chin, this was an omen that calamity should be at work and that his *shen* (soul) should go away".¹

The great Dragon festival of China has been held for many centuries on the 15th day of the first month. On that day a dragon is carried through the streets and a man marches in front of it with a large red ball. De Groot, Hirth and De Visser have written regarding this mysterious ball which was sometimes depicted by artists between two dragons. The ball has been referred to as the sun, a thunder symbol, the moon and a pearl. Sometimes, De Visser notes, it is represented "as a spiral emitting flames or as a ball upon which something like a spiral is delineated". De Visser asks if the spiral here "denotes thunder", and writes:

Hirth and De Groot suppose so. The latter, considering the dragon's nature of a thundergod, arrived at the conclusion that the dragon must belch out the ball instead of swallowing it, for why should he, who causes thunder, persecute it and try to swallow it? Hirth speaks about a dragon which with his claw is putting the thunder into rotation.²

De Visser refers to an interesting Chinese picture in Blacker's *Chats on Oriental China* (London, 1908, p. 54), "where we see two dragons rushing upon a fiery, spiral-shaped ball, under which the following characters are to be read, 'A couple of dragons facing the moon'".³

De Visser suggests that the dragons are here the clouds which swallow (cover) the moon and send down fertilizing rain, and adds:

Owing to the close connexion between the moon and the water, the moon, having been swallowed by the dragon, might have been believed to strengthen the rain-giving power of the latter. The dragon of the festival, persecuting the moon might be carried along the streets in order to cause rain by sympathetic magic.⁴

¹ Amsterdam 1913, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 105-6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

By the Chinese themselves, however, the ball is called a "precious pearl". The sacred pearl was connected with the moon, being "the pearl of the bright moon". A red ball in a temple is "evidently also a pearl". De Visser writes in this connexion :

The spiral is much used in delineating the sacred pearls of Buddhism, so that it might have served also to design those of Taoism, although I must acknowledge that *the spiral of the Buddhist pearl goes upward, while the spiral of the dragon is flat*. We know the close connexion of dragons and pearls in both religions.

The same writer sums up as follows :

The only facts we know are : the eager attitude of the dragons, ready to grasp and swallow the ball ; the ideas of the Chinese themselves as to the ball being the moon or a pearl ; the existence of a kind of sacred "moon pearl" ; the red colour of the ball, its emitting flames and its spiral-like form. As the three last facts are in favour of the thunder theory, I should be inclined to prefer the latter. Yet I am convinced that the dragons do not *belch out* the thunder. If their trying to *grasp* or *swallow* the thunder could be explained, I should immediately accept the theory concerning the thunder-spiral, especially on account of the flames it emits. But I do not see the reason why the god of thunder should persecute thunder itself. Therefore, after having given the above facts, that the reader may take them into consideration, I feel obliged to say : "non liquet".¹

If we regard the spiral as a symbol of natural energy, of life-giving, of what the Chinese call *shen* and *Yang*, the various connexions will be found to be quite logical—such as, for instance, the association of the spiral with fertilizing and rejuvenating rain, with the sun as the source of *Yang*, with the moon which is supposed to promote growth and with the pearl, which, like jade, and gold, and the dragon, are reputed to be impregnated with *Yang*.

According to Chinese doctrine, Nature is divided into two parts—*Yang* and *Yin*. "*Yang*" is light, warmth, life, the Heavens, and *Yin* is darkness, cold, death and the underworld. *Yang* is the male principle and *Yin* the female. According to the Chinese classic, the *Yih-King*, "Heaven is jade, is gold", and jade and gold, "endow with vitality all persons who swallow them. In other words they intensify their souls or

¹ Amsterdam 1913, p. 108.

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shen, which are, like the Heavens, composed of *Yang* matter". Gold and jade were placed in the mouth of a dead Emperor to prevent decay, and "the same reason why gold and jade were used for stuffing the mouth of the dead hold good for the use of pearls".¹ The spiral as a pearl symbol had evidently an intimate connexion with *Yang*. At the same time the spiral symbolized the waterspout, the whirlwind and the whirlpool and thunder. It was the source of life, energy, rain, and all that *Yang* meant to the Chinese.

¹ De Groot, *The Religious System of China*. Leyden, 1892. Vol. I, pp. 271, 277.

SECTION III

THE CELESTIAL WHIRLPOOL LAKE

Winds as carriers of good and evil—Chinese “fung-shui” doctrine—Seasons and Cardinal points—Revolving “Great Bear” constellation—The Chinese “Bushel”—Scandinavian “World Mill”—The Revolving Heavens—“World Mill” and Whirlpool—Northern Stars in Pyramid Age Early Egyptian stellar myths solarised—Northern Stars in “Sun-boat”—Sirius as “Year Star”—“Great Bear” as Set who felled Osiris—Pole Star as Babylonian god—Biblical reference—Aryo-Indians and Pole Star—“Great Bear” as source of Magic—Magicians as early scientists—Polynesian “mana”—Magical ceremonies—Wind and Water only known forms of Energy—Spiral as magic-generator—The Northern Celestial Lake—“Whirling Logs” of the Navaho Indians—The Whirling Cross and Spiral—Egyptian Celestial Lake—Situated in the North—Osiris as “Water Confiner”—Revolving Stars—Stellar and Solar Cults—Gods of Four Quarters—Chinese World Dragon and Osiris—The Egyptian Revolving Crocodile—The Crocodile Constellation—Tammuz of Sumeria as “Great Serpent of Heaven”—Osiris and Tammuz—The Turning Birth goddess—Greek Underworld—A “Whirlpool Lake”—Four spiral rivers—The Vortex theory of Leucippus and Democritus—Atomic theory—Vortex rejected by Epicurus—Ignored by Lucretius—Democritus and the spiral nebula—The Ancient Scientists.

Before dealing with the source of the energy which was, to the early thinkers, manifested by those spiral gusts, the whirlwinds, attention should be drawn to the fact that in many ancient religions the magical influences emanating from the cardinal points were, as has been indicated, supposed to be conveyed by the winds. An old Gaelic saying in this connexion is :

Shut the north window,
And quickly close the window to the north ;
And shut the window facing west,
Evil never came from the east.¹

In an unpublished Gaelic folk tale from Skye in possession of the writer, a wicked woman is instructed by her brother to

¹ Campbell. *Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*, p. 69.

"shut the windows to the north and open the windows to the south, and do not let the fire go out". But, in his absence, the sister shuts the south windows, and opens the north windows and puts out the fire. By putting out the fire, she invokes a supernatural being. An evil demon comes to woo her and plot evil against her brother.

The wind from the north-east,
Neither good for man nor beast—

is an old English saying. Hippocrates favoured the north wind but disliked the south. Behind preferences and dislikes of this kind, whether or not they are found to have a local significance, lies the ancient belief in good or evil emanations from the cardinal points.

In Chinese mythology the beliefs connected with wind and water are of fundamental importance. Wind is controlled by the White Tiger god of the west and water by the Green Dragon god of the east. "These animals", as De Groot says, "represent all that is expressed by the word *fung-shui*" and he emphasizes that "*Fung-shui* denoted the atmospherical influences which bear absolute sway over the fate of man, as none of the principal elements of life can be produced without favourable weather and rains". It was necessary that the dead, as well as the living, should be influenced for their good by the "breaths" from the source of natural energy. The sites for a burial ground and for a grave were carefully chosen so that natural energy might reach the dead. Graves faced the south so that the Dragon might exercise direct influence on the left (east) and the White Tiger of the right (west).¹

The idea that atmospherical influences issued from the cardinal points was closely associated with the revolution of the seasons. These, as has been indicated, were connected with the cardinal points, north being the "air" of winter, east of spring, south of summer and west of autumn. But these connexions were not of arbitrary character—the result of the theorising of priestly astronomers, but the direct result of a discovery made by those intelligent thinkers and observers among the early agriculturists who measured the year and introduced the Calendar which is still in use all over

¹ De Groot. *The Religious System of China*, Book I, Part III, pp. 935-949.

the world, We are therefore not dealing with Mr. Andrew Lang's "savages", but with men quite as intelligent and perhaps much more observant than the great majority of modern men. Some were the Newtons and Darwins of their time.

The constellation of the "Great Bear" (*Ursa Major*), known widely in America as "The Dipper", has a significant connexion with the seasons. In China it is called the "Bushel" and its "tail" is the "Pointer". The "tail" was so named, as we gather from Chinese writings, because when it first appears of an evening, it points to the east in spring, to the south in summer, to the west in autumn and to the north in winter. In the *Shu King* (Part II, Book 1) the "Bushel" is referred to as "the pearl-adorned turning sphere with its transverse tube of jade",¹ while the Pole star round which the "Bushel" ("Great Bear") revolves is the "Pivot of the sky". This pivot, which is supposed to be of sacred jade, revolves constantly "carrying round with it all the other heavenly bodies". That this concept was not necessarily of Chinese origin is made manifest by the fact that it is met with in Scandinavian mythology. "The starlit sky", writes Rydberg in this connexion, "was thought to be in motion. The sailors and shepherds of the Teutons very well knew that this revolving

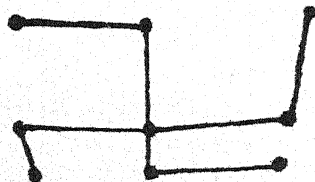


FIG. 32.

Chinese Stellar Swastika, called Pa-Kui (eight chiefs). It includes stars of Phoenix and Pisces. According to the Mongols, the stars are "eight devils" who protect robbers. This evil stellar swastika was opposed to the North.

was round a fixed point, the polar star, and it is probable that *veraldar nagli*, the 'world nail', the 'world spike', an expression preserved in *Eddubrott II*, designates the Pole star. . . . The motion of the starry firmament is defined, always the same, always in the same direction, and keeps equal step with the march of time itself. It does not, therefore, depend on the accidental pleasure of gods or other powers. On the other hand, it seems to be caused by a mechanism operating evenly and regularly". The mechanism in question

¹ Legge Texts of Taoism, Vol. II, p. 265. The earlier Chinese name of *Ursa Major* was *Tih Cheh* (chariot of the Supreme One).

was supposed to be the magic-working World Mill, or Grotte-mill—the stone mill of the early agriculturists and early metal workers who crushed quartz. “The handle”, Rydberg continues, “extends to the edge of the world, and the nine giantesses who are compelled to turn the mill, pushing the sweep before them, march along the outer edge of the universe. Thus we get an intelligible idea of what Snæbjorn means when he says that Eylud’s¹ nine women turn the Grotte ‘along the edge of the earth’ ”.²

The whirlpool—the water spiral—was, as has been indicated, connected with the World Mill. Rydberg writes in this regard :

Of the mill it is said that it is dangerous to men, dangerous to fleets and to crews, and that it causes the maelstrom (svelgr) when the water of the ocean rushes down through the eye of the mill-stone. The same was said of Hvergelmer, that causes ebb and flow and maelstrom, when the water of the world alternately flows into and out of this great source. To judge from all this, the mill has been conceived as so made that its foundation timbers stood on solid ground in the lower world, and thence rose up into the sea, in which the stones resting on this super-structure were located. The revolving “eye” of the mill stone was directly above Hvergelmer, and served as the channel through which the water flowed to and from the great fountain of the world’s waters. . . . This vast fountain is the mother of the ocean and of all waters, and the ever open connexion between the waters of heaven, of the earth, and of the lower world.³

Connected with the mill was Mundilfore, father of the sun. Vigfusson says that *mundill* “refers to the veering round or revolution of the heavens”; the latter part of Mundilfore’s name “refers to the verb *fœra*, to conduct, to move”. “Thus”, says Rydberg, “he (Mundilfore) is that power who has to take charge of the revolutions of the starry vault of heaven”.

In India, as has been shown, the whirlpool encloses the offspring (embryo). This idea that life originated in a spiral

¹ “Eylud” means “island mill”.

² Teutonic Mythology, translation by R. B. Anderson. London, 1889, pp. 397-8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 394, 395.

can be traced in Scandinavian World Mill lore. At the beginning the giant Ymir is ground by the mill :

✓ From the flesh of Ymir the world was formed,
 From his blood the billows of the sea,
 The hills from his bones, the trees from his hair,
 The sphere of the heaven from his skull
 Out of his brows the blithe Powers made
 Midgarth¹ for sons of men,
 And out of his brains were the angry clouds
 All shaped above in the sky.²

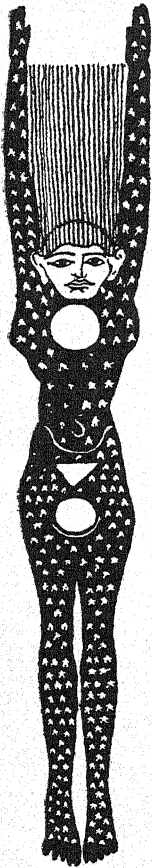
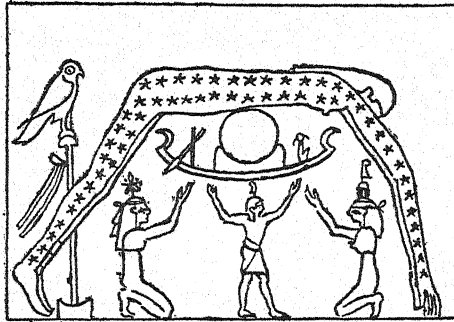
It is evident that the idea of the World Mill originated as a result of the observation of the seasonal revolutions of the constellation of the "Great Bear". It is localized in Scandinavian mythology. Apparently the Calendar and therefore the controlling World Mill were introduced by the early agriculturists who introduced a mill for grinding corn. The connexion of the Northern whirlpool, the maelstrom, with the World Mill is of very special interest. The spiral and the swastika (the revolving seasons) were evidently closely associated in the religion of the agriculturists.

In ancient Egypt, as has been stated, special importance was attached to the northern night sky. In pre-Dynastic times the Egyptians regarded a group of stars in this region of the firmament as the "Imperishable Ones", believing they were the souls of the dead—of their former rulers. Traces of this ancient conception are met with in the Pyramid Texts. "These (stars)", writes Breasted, "are said to be in the north of the sky, and the suggestion that the circumpolar stars, which never set or disappear, are the ones which are meant is a very probable one. While there are Utterances in the Pyramid Texts which define the stellar notion of the hereafter without any reference to the Solar faith, which have doubtless descended from a more ancient day when the stellar belief was independent of the Solar, it is evident that the stellar notion has been absorbed in the Solar. . . . The idea that life was in the sky is . . . far older than the Osirian faith in the Pyramid Texts".³

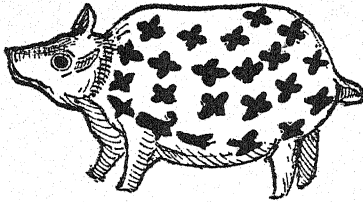
¹ The Earth.

² *The Elder or Poetic Edda*, translation by Olive Bray. London, 1908, p. 19.

³ *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 101-2.



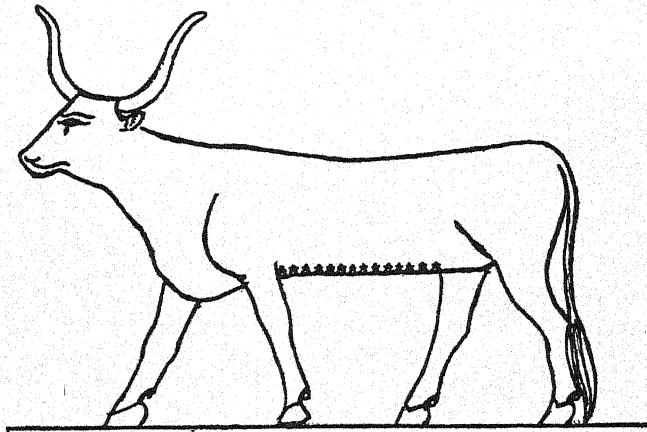
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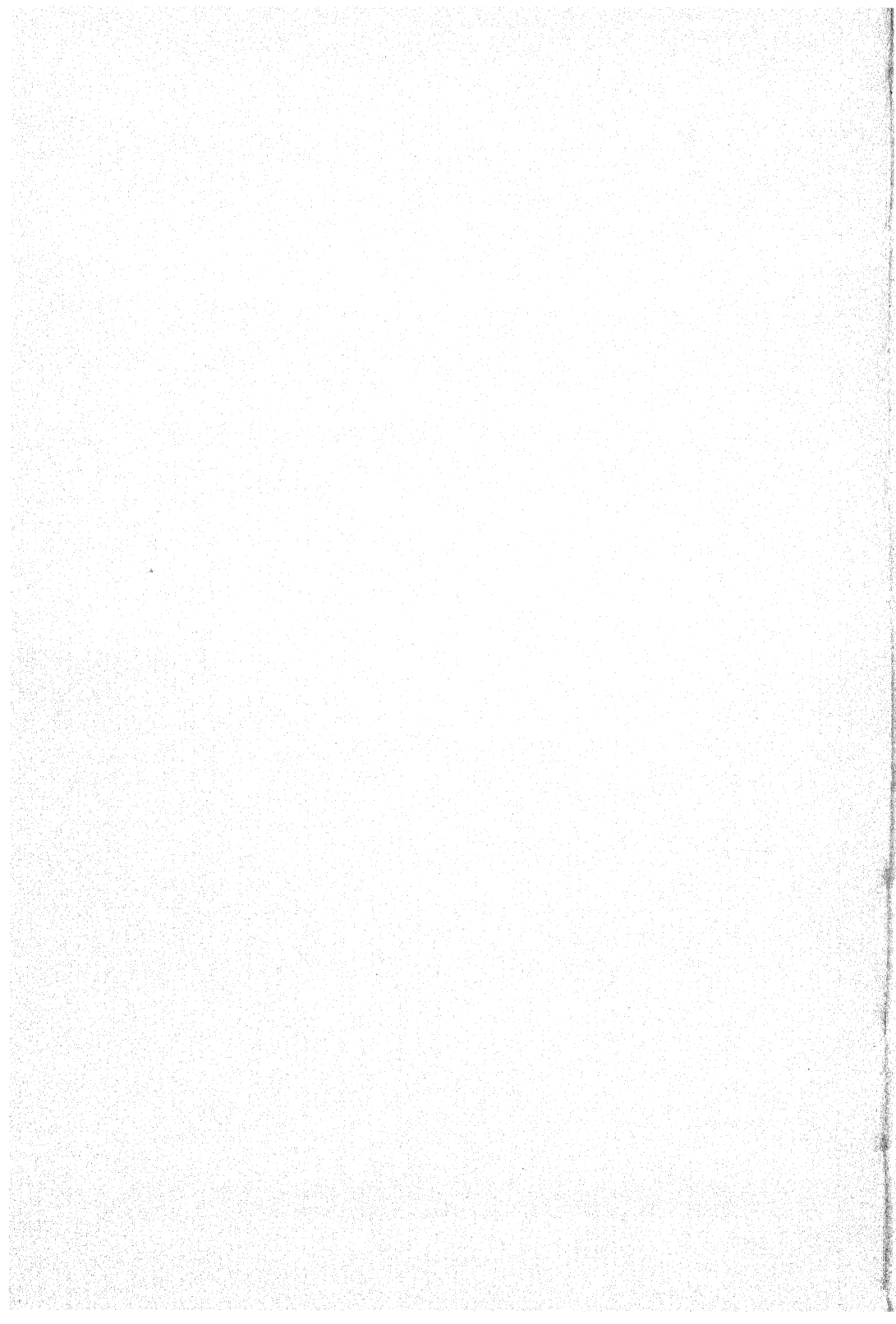


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PLATE IX

STAR-SPANGLED DEITIES

- I The goddess Nut as the starry sky. She gave birth to the sun; the moon emerged (as milk) from her breasts. Her arms and legs are the "pillars" of the four quarters.
- II Another form of the star-spangled Nut. The Horus falcon is behind her, and beneath her the god Shu supports the boat of the sun, standing between the goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- III Star-spangled sky-pig found by Dr. Schliemann at Troy. It evidently supplanted the star-spangled cow of Egypt in the area in which it was adored.
- IV Priestess, painting Egyptian sacred cow.
- V The cow of the sky (a form of Nut and Hathor) with stars on the lower part of its body.



The northern stars were called "the Club Stars" (Pyramid Text 458) and the "Striker", the "Thigh", "Leg", etc., and they were regarded as specially sacred. After the fusion of the solar and stellar beliefs, these stars became the rowers of the boat of the sun god, a fact which suggests that the northern stars were, from an early period, supposed to be intimately concerned with the movements of other heavenly bodies. Breasted notes that in the Pyramid Texts "there is a trace of the process (of fusing stellar and solar beliefs) in the endeavour to reconcile the northern station of the 'Imperishables', with the 'east' as the place of the dead in the Solar faith". He refers in this connexion to Pyramid Text 1000, in which provision is made that the dead king "may ferry over to Re (the sun) to the horizon . . . to his station on the east side of the sky, in its northern region among the Imperishable (stars)".¹ The star Sirius, whose rising coincides with the rising of the Nile (first in the Otherworld, however), is referred to as "the year (star)" in Pyramid Text 965. But we do not know a great deal about the star lore of pre-Dynastic and early Dynastic Egypt. It is evident, however, that the northern stars were especially sacred. The "Great Bear" or "striker" was ultimately identified with Set, who "felled" Osiris—a myth which may have originally had an intimate connexion with the revolution of the seasons. In the Greek version of it, Osiris is carried away by the flooding Nile. The sacrificed Osiris was, in one of his aspects, the inundation and the sea,² as was also the sacrificed Ymir of Scandinavia.

In Babylonia the Pole star was the controlling spirit of the night sky and was called Ilu Sar ("the god Star") or "Anshar" ("Star of the Height" or "Star of the Most High"). Isaiah (xiv, 4-14) refers to this ancient conception:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . .

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend unto heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

¹ *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 102.

² Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 18, 20, 146.

The ancient Aryo-Indians called *Ursa Major* "the seven bears" and the "seven Rishis", and the Pole star was "Dhruva". The pole star is mentioned in the Sutrās "in connexion with the marriage ritual in which the star is pointed out to the bride as an emblem of constancy".¹

There seems to be little doubt that the Great Bear was regarded as the source of the energy which permeated the world, causing the seasons to follow one another in regular succession, rains to fall, and crops to grow and ripen. Withal, it exercised directly and indirectly an influence on man. It assured him of his supply of food, but if it gave him health and strength, it also, as the controller of water and wind, caused droughts in season, and sent blights and diseases on evil winds. In short, it was the source of what we know as magic.

Much has been written regarding ancient beliefs connected with magic. Sir James G. Frazer says with characteristic acuteness in this connexion :

Its fundamental conception is identical with that of modern science ; underlying the whole system is a faith, implicit but real and firm, in the order and uniformity of nature. The magician does not doubt that the same causes will always produce the same effects. . . . He supplicates no higher power : he sues the favour of no fickle and wayward being :

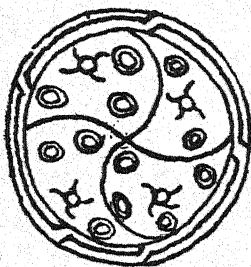


FIG. 33A.

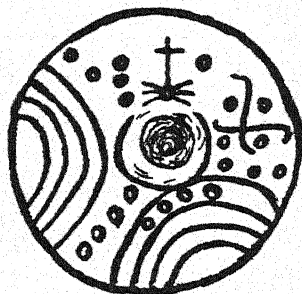


FIG. 33B.

CELESTIAL WHEELS

A, One of the four wheels of the four beasts in a 12th century manuscript in British Museum (Anonymi Commentarius in Apocalypsin. Add. 11, 695). It shows a revolving swastika among star symbols.

B, Whorl dug up at Troy by Dr. Henry Schliemann. A swastika is revolving in a group of seven stars, (? *Ursa Major*) and a star (? pole star) is marked by a cross.

¹ Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, pp. 107, 117, 405.

he abases himself before no awful deity. Yet his power, great as he believes it to be, is by no means arbitrary and unlimited. He can wield it only so long as he strictly conforms to the rules of his art, or to what may be called the laws of nature as conceived by him. . . . Thus the analogy between the magical and the scientific conceptions of the world is close. In both of them the succession of events is perfectly regular and certain, being determined by immutable laws.

. . . . Both of them open up a seemingly boundless vista of possibilities to him who knows the causes of things and can touch the secret springs that set in motion the vast and interesting mechanism of the world.¹

The Polynesians and Melanesians referred to the invisible power which permeates the world as *mana*.

By means of this men are able to control or direct the forces of nature, to make rain or sunshine, wind or calm, to cause sickness or remove it, to know what is far off in time and space, to bring good luck and prosperity, or to blast and curse.

. . . . By whatever name it is called, it is the belief in this supernatural power, and in the efficacy of the various means by which spirits and ghosts can be induced to exercise it for the benefit of men, that is the foundation of the rites and practices which can be called religious; and it is from the same belief that everything which may be called Magic and Witchcraft draws its origin.²

In all the old religious systems, the priest-kings, and priests performed ceremonies and made offerings so as to "tap" the source of world-energy and to assist nature to perform its functions with smoothness and regularity. After death the priest-kings departed to the sky world, as did the Egyptian Pharaohs, and became the gods who controlled the heavenly bodies which ruled the seasons. The belief in the existence of these gods, who were grouped at the cardinal points, was of later origin, however, than the recognition of the influence exercised by the constellation of the Great Bear. Magical practices obtained as has been indicated, among the Cro-Magnon Palæolithic hunters of Western Europe, but it was evidently not until after the introduction of the agricultural mode of life and of the Calendar that the connexion between the Great Bear and the seasons was detected.

Having observed that the seasons, and therefore seasonal winds and the water supply were controlled by the constellation

¹ *The Golden Bough (The Magic Art, Vol. I, pp. 220-1).* London, 1911.

² R. H. Codrington. *The Melanesians*, pp. 191 *et seq.*

in question, the early thinkers apparently concerned themselves with the problem of how the Great Bear revolved. It was evidently kept spinning—coiling and revolving like the Chinese Dragon—by some particular force emanating from a centre, from the fixed pole star.

The only forms of natural energy of which the early Newtons had knowledge were wind and water. The whirlwind and the whirlpool, as the lore connected with these phenomena indicates, were evidently regarded as instalments of the greater energy which caused the revolutions of the Great Bear. The season-controlling constellation was kept spinning by a Celestial whirlwind, or whirlpool, or by both. From the revolving current of air, the various good and bad winds were released at the cardinal points; from the Celestial whirlpool, or the lake enclosed by the revolving serpent-dragon, came the rains or river floods in season.

The following extract from the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*¹ refers to the winds that support and “turn” the sky:

I then surveyed the receptacles of all the Winds, perceiving that in them were the ornaments of the whole creation, and the foundation of the Earth. I surveyed the Stone, the corners of the Earth.

I also beheld the four Winds which bear up the Earth and the firmament of the heavens. And I beheld the Winds occupying the Height of the heavens; arising in the middle of the heavens and of the Earth, and constituting the Pillars of the heavens.²

I saw the Winds which turn the sky, which cause the orb of the sun and all the stars to set; and over the Earth I saw the Winds which support the clouds.

The ancient Egyptians believed, as stated, that the Nile had its source in the sky.

The Hindus similarly believed that the Ganges fell from the sky and the Chinese entertained the same belief regarding the Yellow river. Even the Aranda of Central Australia, as Strehlow found, could tell of a sky river, with inexhaustible reservoirs of sweet water, whose banks were fringed by fruit trees and berry bushes—a concept which evidently did not have spontaneous generation in Australia.

¹ Lawrence's translation, 1821, XVIII, 1-6.

² The Egyptian atmosphere god Shu supports the heavens as Nut and along with him were sometimes depicted the four Y-shaped symbols, the sky pillars, as some think, or the hieroglyphic signifying “to raise up” repeated four times.

As a magic-, or *mana*-generator, or a mechanism controlled by *mana*, the spiral can be connected with the Great Bear. It would appear, indeed, that the spiral was a symbol of the Celestial whirlwind or whirlpool, and that was why it was associated with the cross, the symbol of the four cardinal points, and the swastika, the symbol of the revolving seasons controlled by the Great Bear.

We meet with the memory of the celestial whirlpool in the mythology of the Navaho Indians of New Mexico and Arizona.¹ The Navaho made a dry painting of a swastika which they called the "cross of logs" and the "whirling logs" (see Frontispiece). Their knowledge of it was derived from a Red Indian visionary or prophet who had drifted in a hollow log to the "whirling lake" in which the cross revolved. There the gods taught him rites and mysteries, what to cook and what to eat raw, and he procured magical seeds with the help of his pet turkey.² He was the first to bring home knowledge of the rites and mysteries which were considered necessary to ensure the food supply and cure disease by renewing life.

The mythical "lake or whirlpool where the whirling logs are said to be is", writes Mr. Matthews, "called Tó-nihilin, or 'Waters that Flow Around'", and the name of the floating swastika or cross with gods on the arms, is "Tsinéole" and translated 'Whirling Wood (Logs, Sticks)'. The whirling lake is "surrounded by mountains" and it is situated in the north.³ In the myth of the visionary's visit to the mythical lake it would appear that, like the Chinese and other visitors to the Celestial regions, that worthy sailed to the source of rivers in the sky, reaching the Celestial parent lake. The myth tells:⁴

The lake had two outlets: one to the north-west flowed to other rivers and to the ocean in the west; one to the south-west flowed into the whirling lake of Tó-nihilin which had no outlet and no bottom. It was on the latter stream that the log with the Indian inside floated and soon came to the

¹ *The Night Chant, a Navaho Ceremony*, by Washington Matthews. (*Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. VI, New York, 1902.)

² The rain-bringing bird.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 312 (note).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 183 *et seq.*

whirling water which was surrounded by high steep cliffs. Here were the whirling logs he had so often heard of. When his log entered the lake it ran first towards the centre, then it moved around four times, *making each time a wider circle* until it approached the shore and landed close to the inlet and south of it. The yéi (god) pulled the plug from the butt of the log and helped the Indian to come out on the land. When he was out, they put the plug back again and told him to look around.

He beheld the cross of sticks circling on the lake. It did not move on its own centre, but turned around the centre of the water. The log which lay from east to west was at the bottom; that which lay from north to south was on the top.

On each of the logs, four holy ones were seated—two at each end, and all were singing a song the burden of which was, "He comes for my sake". . . . They began to sing another song. . . . After this, they sang a third song, the burden of which was "From the east he looks at me", and a fourth song, "The Rain brings pollen on the tassel".

The cross of logs went around the lake four times, getting closer to the shore each time, while the holy ones sang; till at last it reached the western shore where they landed and went into their houses.

The Indian was conducted to a house and he sang sacred songs as he went and as he entered :

The holy ones inside the lodge cried, "One of the earth people is coming. He brings soft goods; he brings jewels; he brings fruits; he brings good thunder; he brings the he-rain and the she-rain".

He was welcomed by "those holy ones who had sat upon the logs while they were whirling around the lake", and given instruction regarding the mystery. The gods conducted him to the cross of logs, and as they approached "flashes of lightning shot out of it"; they reached it by using a "short rainbow" as a bridge.

The yébaka or male divinity to whom belonged the eastern arm got on the cross first—no one else was allowed to get on before him. . . . As soon as all were on the cross it floated to the centre of the lake, circled around the water four times as it did when he first saw it, and landed at the place from which it had started.

The ancient Egyptians, as has been stated, believed that the Nile flowed from the sky. There are undoubted traces of the belief that it had its source in a lake in the region of the

Great Bear and was fed by pools. The "Lily lake" of the Pyramid Texts may have been a starry lake. Over the Celestial lake "the gods make the swallows fly. The swallows are the Imperishable stars (the northern stars)", as the Pyramid Texts state explicitly. When the Pharaoh crosses the Celestial river or lake, he uses the "two floats" or a boat, or is taken into the boat of a reluctant and surly ferryman. This ferryman, whose face is turned backward, or "who looks behind", was probably, as has been suggested more than once, originally a star, perhaps Canopus, or a star or group of stars in Orion.

The Pharaoh is welcomed on the shore of the Celestial lake by the gods who "cast off their sandals and their raiment to dance for joy." Pharaoh bathes in the "lake of rushes" and the gods dry his limbs.¹ He is then conducted to a palace, or, as in the solar cult's particular texts, he enters the sunboat of Re. In the oldest of the Pyramid Texts—those referring to King Unis—the gods known as the "Great-Ones-North-of-the-Sky" light a fire and put on kettles to cook a cannibalistic feast :

The Dwellers-in-the-sky revolve for King Unis (in his service).

[The Kettles are replenished] for him with the legs of their women.

He (Unis) has encircled all the Two Skies (corresponding to the Two Lands),

He has revolved about the two regions.²

King Unis is the "Great-Mighty-One"

Who overpowers the "Mighty Ones"

King Unis is a god, older than the eldest

Appointment as "Great One" is given to him

By Orion, father of the gods.³

The dead king becomes a star in Pyramid Text 251 and is addressed as such :

Thou lookest down upon Osiris commanding the Glorious (=the dead). There thou standest, being far from him, (for) thou art not of them (the dead), thou belongest not among them.⁴

¹ Breasted. *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 89 *et seq.*, 116 *et seq.*, 134 *et seq.*

² Upper and Lower Egypt.

³ Breasted, *op. cit.*, 128, 129.

⁴ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

It is uncertain whether or not Osiris was originally a star god. In the Pyramid Age he was identified with the "Imperishable Stars" (Northern stars), which were referred to as the "Followers of Osiris".¹ He was, however, as later evidence demonstrates, essentially a god of the dead. In the Pyramid Texts he is "felled" by Set and "drowned" in the Nile²; or he is set afloat in the Nile in a chest, as a late myth has it. The god was certainly identified but as a dead god, with the Nile, and especially with the "new water"—the inundation which flowed after his execution. Pyramid Text 589 states in this connexion :

Horus comes ! He beholds his father in thee, Young (or New) one, in thy name of Young (or New) water.

"Young" or "new" as applied to water is connected with the idea of rejuvenescence.

The "new", "young" or "fresh" water may, in the original myth, have been confined by a serpent-dragon like the Hindu Vritra, which the god Indra slays annually. Set, who felled Osiris, may have been the Egyptian Indra. The source of the Nile was supposed to be in a cavern—"the cavern of Osiris"—or the water was supposed to be "confined" in the folds of a serpent, which was Osiris, or an older god with whom the sacrificed Osiris became identified.

The slayer of the serpent ultimately became identified with young Horus. But Horus and Set were originally associated as Kings of the North and South, and there is a two-headed Horus-Set god. "There are even

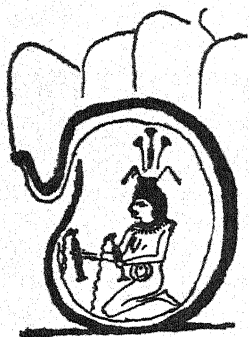


FIG. 34. NILE WATER-CONFINING SERPENT

The shrine of the River Nile at Biggeh. Reproduced from bas-relief in Temple of Philae.

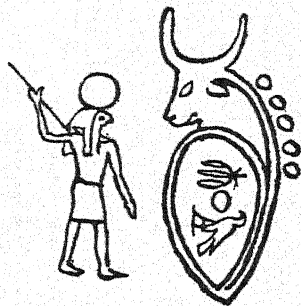


FIG. 35. HORUS ATTACKS "GREAT BEAR" CONSTELLATION WHICH IS A BULL-HEADED "WATER CONFINING" DEMON

¹ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

² Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

traces", says Breasted, "of a similar ancient correlation of Osiris himself with Set".¹

Set became ultimately specialized as the demon of desert-drought, who was slain by Horus. But Osiris was originally the "dangerous god", as Breasted emphasises, and he may have been that as the "water confiner". "The tradition of his

unfavourable character survived in vague reminiscences long centuries after he had gained wide popularity".²

Osiris is referred to in the Pyramid Texts

as a water-enclosing being and addressed :

Thou art great, thou art green, in thy name of Great Green (Sea)³; lo, thou art round as the Great Circle (Okeanos); lo, thou art turned about, thou art round as the circle that encircles the Haunebu (Ægeans)"⁴

Thou includest all things in thy embrace, in thy name of "Encircler of the Haunebu"⁵.

Thou has encircled every god in thy embrace, their lands and all their possessions.

Breasted calls attention in this connexion to the coiled Osiris on the sarcophagus of Seti I of the XIXth dynasty, referred to as "Osiris encircling the Nether-World".⁶



FIG. 37. NILE GOD ENCLOSED BY FOUR-HEADED WATER-CONFINING SERPENT



FIG. 36. MAYA WATER-CONFINING SERPENT

¹ *op cit.*, p. 40.

² *op cit.*, p. 38.

³ The Mediterranean.

⁴ Pyramid Texts, 2063-8.

⁵ Pyramid Text, 1631.

⁶ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

The Nile god is shown in the late bas-relief in the small temple of Philae enclosed by a water-confining serpent. Apparently this concept is a survival of great antiquity. An astronomical illustration also shows Horus attacking a water-confiner in the sky—a bull or cow-headed serpent.

The legend of the dismemberment of Osiris by Set may not only be reminiscent of an ancient burial custom, but of the astronomical myth of the slaying of the water-confining serpent. In the *Book of the Dead*, Chap. XVII¹ the Pole star is referred to as the "Coffin of Osiris".

It is not yet possible, and it may never be possible, to reconstruct the ancient myth or myths connected with the celestial combat which resulted in the confined waters of the sky being released. The "thigh" is certainly the Great Bear and the "leg" is Cassiopeia, but the dismemberment myth which may have accounted for these has been lost. In the *Book of the Dead* (Chap. 98) we read (Renouf's translation):

Oh, thou leg in the Northern sky, and in that most conspicuous but inaccessible stream; I rise up and come to light as a god, I am conspicuous but inaccessible.

The Stream is literally "great of seeing", i.e., conspicuous, and it "does not come into port"—that is, it is out at sea and so inaccessible. "To come into port" was a frequent euphemism for "die", though it does not seem to bear that meaning here. Renouf believes the conspicuous and inaccessible stream to be the "Milky Way" and the "Leg", i.e., the four principal stars of Cassiopeia which are in the "Milky Way". The constellation is near the Pole Star ("coffin of Osiris"). It would appear that the late representations of Horus drifting in a boat, and others of Osiris in a boat, are survivals from a pre-Dynastic stellar myth. Tammuz of Sumeria drifted in a "sunken boat", Karna of India (son of the sun) was set a-drift, and there is a curious Japanese myth of Hiruko (leech child) drifting in a reed boat on the ocean (or sky sea); at the age of three he could not stand upright. It may be that some old stellar myth was concerned with the leech-like star child "drifting" in heaven, who had to be supplied with a backbone which was ceremonially set up on earth like the Egyptian *ded* symbol.

¹ Renouf's translation, p. 47.

The setting up of the backbone of Osiris was one of the most important functions at the restoration of his body after its dismemberment. This was annually celebrated at Busiris on the 30th of Khoiak, at the end of that part of the Egyptian year devoted to the Osirian festivals, and was kept with strange rites; e.g., the priests of the different sanctuaries fought together with fists and cudgels.

The *ded* amulet not only gave steadfastness (backbone) to the mummy, but provided food, and its four upper sections may be symbols of the cardinal points and the seasons regulated by the four gods of the four quarters. The "gilded *ded*" brought to the mummy is, in the *Book of the Dead* (Chapter CLV) said to be made from "the heart of a sycamore fig"¹ (see Chapter on "Tree Worship" for significance of this tree).

Other survivals are referred to by Maspero, who wrote:²

The Nile was said to have its source in Paradise, to transverse burning regions inaccessible to man, and afterwards to fall into the sea whence it made its way to Egypt. Sometimes it carried down from its celestial sources branches and fruits unlike any to be found on earth.

In a footnote he referred to survivals of the ancient concept:

As late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, Wendelinus devoted part of his *Admiranda Nili* (§ III, pp. 27-31) to proving that the river did not rise in the Earthly Paradise. At Gurnah, forty years ago, the Scotch traveller Rhind picked up a Mohammedan legend which stated that the Nile flows down from the sky (*Thebes, Its Tombs and their Tenants*, pp. 301-4).³

But even in the Pyramid Age the flood was supposed to have been caused by the tears of Isis mourning for Osiris. Maspero notes in this connexion that "The might of the great flood of tears issuing from the Great Goddess" is found in the Pyramid Texts of Unas (Text, 395) and "is in all probability a reference to the 'Night of the Drop'".⁴

¹ Renouf, *Life Work*, Vol. III, p. 419, and *Book of the Dead*, pp. 165, 166, and note on Chapter LXXIV. p. 139.

A. Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, pp. 289-290.

Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, p. 351.

S. Langdon, *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, pp. 299-341.

² *The Dawn of Civilization* (McClure's translation), London, 1894, p. 20.

³ *op cit.*, p. 20. Note 2.

⁴ Maspero, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Note 2.

The explanation may be that as Osiris was identified with the god known as "first (or Head) of the Westerners", he was similarly identified with the deity of the stellar cult who was slain to release the waters. The curved Osiris, as has been said, suggests that originally this deity was a serpent. Horus, the serpent-slayer, had no original connexion with the Osiris group. Breasted considers that the feud between Horus and Set "was originally a Solar incident and quite independent of the Osiris myth".¹ A very obscure passage in the Pyramid Texts (§ 204-6) refers to "Set who is at Ombos, the Lord of the Land of the South and their spirits . . ." The Pharaoh is referred to as a "soul" who is "mightier than the gods of the South and their spirits".

Although Osiris became later the god of the Nether World, or Underworld (Dewat), having taken the place of, or absorbed, the older deity known as "First of the Westerners",² the original Dewat "is evidently in the sky" in a considerable number of the Pyramid Texts. Breasted quotes in this connexion the significant passages:

The sky conceived thee together with Orion;
Dewat bears thee together with Orion.
(Pyramid Texts, 820, 1527.)

Who voyages the sky with Orion,
Who sails Dewat with Osiris.
(Pyramid Text, 882.)

The "Nile flows out of it (Dewat)", and Dewat leads the dead Pharaoh "to the place where Orion (=the sky), and Orion in the horizon are encircled by Dewat".³ Breasted writes in this connexion:

Here Dewat is in the horizon, and likewise we find the dead "descends among" the dwellers in Dewat after he has ascended to the sky. It was thus sufficiently accessible from the sky, so that the dead, after he ascended, bathed in the "lake of Dewat", and while in the sky he became a "glorious one dwelling in Dewat" . . . Dewat . . . merged into the Nether World, with which it was originally identified, or, being originally the Nether World, it had its counterpart in the sky.⁴

¹ *op cit.*, p. 40.

² Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

³ Pyramid Texts, 802, 151.

⁴ *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 144. Note 2.

When Unis ascends the sky and becomes the Osiris, he causes the inundation :

Unis comes hither up-stream when the flood inundates . . . Unis comes to the pools that are in the regions of the flood at the great inundation. . . . It is Unis who inundates the land.

King Pepi likewise becomes the Osiris and is addressed :

This, thy cavern, is the broad hall of Osiris, O King Pepi, which brings the wind and [guides] the north wind.¹ It raises thee as Osiris, O King Pepi . . . The lakes fill, the canals are inundated.

King Mernere becomes the Osiris :

Ho this Osiris, King Mernere ! Thy water, thy libation is the great inundation that came forth from thee (as Osiris).²

There can be no doubt regarding the connexion between Osiris and the northern stars, the "Imperishable Ones". The dead went to the north, according to the beliefs of the old stellar cult, and was addressed :

Thou goest upon the way whereon the gods go. . . .
Thou goest to those northern gods, the Imperishable stars.³

As we have seen, the discovery of the North and South and their combination with the West and East—the sun-path by day—brought into existence the equal-limbed cross symbol. The gods of the cardinal points afterwards came into prominence.

Pharaoh was after death identified with a fixed controlling star—the pole star—as the lofty one among the Imperishable (Northern) stars,⁴ or with the Great Bear, for he "revolved about the two regions".⁵ Unis, is in the night sky, the "Great Power", the "Power of Powers".

He becomes also the Ashem of Ashem, the great Ashem of the Ashemu. . . . But what is the meaning of Ashem ?
. . . He is also able to go round about heaven at pleasure,

¹ Here again we meet with the idea of a "wind hole."

² Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 18, 19. The reader is referred to this epoch-making work for further evidence regarding the problems under consideration and other phases of Egyptian religion.

³ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁴ Breasted, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 and 142.

⁵ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

and as the Great Sekhem, or Power, his visible emblem is Sah or Orion, and he is able to repeat his rising in heaven with this constellation. It is not improbable that the identification of Orion with Kings who had eaten the gods filtered down in tradition to the Semitic people who lived in the Delta in dynastic times, and so became the base of the legends about Orion which are found among the Arabs and Hebrews.¹

As the solar cult absorbed the stellar cult beliefs, so did it absorb the gods of the four quarters. The four Horuses, or four sons of Horus, were evidently taken over. Horus was sometimes given "four faces": he was, in short, a swastika. The sun-god Re acquired four horns, and these undoubtedly refer to the cardinal points. In the Pyramid Texts (468, 471) they are described as left (East), right (West), in front (South), and behind (North), and in that order. In ancient Egyptian the words for right and left are the same as West and East.

In Chinese dragon lore we meet with the enormous serpent-dragon, named Enlightener, which controls the whole universe. It is described in the *Shan hai king*, a very old Chinese classic, as follows:

The god of Mount Chung is called "Enlightener of the Darkness". By looking (*i.e.* by opening his eyes) he creates daylight, and by closing his eyes he creates night. By blowing he makes winter, by exhaling he makes summer. He neither eats nor drinks nor does he rest. His breath causes wind. His length is a thousand miles. He is in the East of Wu-K'i ("without bowels"). As a living being, he has a human face, the body of a snake and a red colour. He lives at the foot of Mount Chung.

De Visser says that the commentator Kwoh P'oh (who died A.D. 322) explains this passage as follows:

"Enlightener" is a dragon; he enlightens the nine *yin* (darknesses, *i.e.* the nine points of the compass at the opposite, dark side of the earth, which is a flat disk; these nine points are North, South, East, West, North-east, North-west, South-east, South-west, and the Centre).

At a conference of magicians and learned men, convoked by the famous emperor Wu, one spoke as follows:

I made a journey to the north pole, and came to a mountain planted with fire, which neither the sun, nor the moon ever illumines, but which is lighted to its uttermost bounds by a blue dragon by means of a torch which it holds in its jaws.

¹ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, London, 1904, pp. 40-1.

The Chinese old divinatory work, *Yih lin*, says :

A black dragon vomits light and makes Darkness (*yin*) turn into Light (*yang*).¹

An Egyptian hymn of the twelfth century B.C. presents Osiris as a world-dragon of like character to the Chinese "Enlightener" and as "lord of the soil" who lies sleeping on the sand :

Re-Khepri shines on thy body, when thou liest as Sokar, and he drives away the darkness which is upon thee, that he may bring light to thine eyes. . . . The soil is on thy arm, its corners are upon thee as far as the four pillars of the sky. When thou movest, the earth trembles. . . . As for thee, the Nile comes forth from the sweat of thy hands. Thou spewest out the wind that is in thy throat into the nostrils of men, and that whereon men live is divine.²

Ptah was likewise a "world giant".

The great world-dragon, "Enlightener" of China may have been supposed to revolve like the birth-foretelling dragons. It would seem that some such idea obtained, in ancient Egypt, too. As much is suggested by a magical text translated by Birch which refers to :

A crocodile carrying a feather on its head, sitting on a particular shaped wheel ; inside the wheel is an *uraeus* serpent ; a legend relative to a crocodile calls it : "The turner of destruction crocodile, that which nurtured by impurity, the great truth, burning its enemies by the entire revolution of the hole".

Birch notes that the word *Karrt*, translated "hole" or "lock", is "applied to the abodes of the damned in Hades".³ It is possible that the revolving crocodile was originally a stellar reptile. One of the northern star groups was, in fact, a crocodile.

The Sumero-Babylonian god Tammuz has many points of connexion with the Egyptian god Osiris, whose early connexion with the serpent as a water-confiner and water-giver is suggested by his coiled forms, as we have seen.

Dr. Langdon⁴ shows that Tammuz was in one of his forms the "great serpent dragon", and that "the same title is

¹ De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, pp. 62-3.

² Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 21.

³ *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI, p. 120.

⁴ *Tammuz and Ishtar*, Oxford, 1914, pp. 114 et seq.

more than once applied to the mother goddess herself". The most important of Tammuz's titles was *ama-ušumgal-anna* ("mother great serpent of heaven"). "Great-serpent" ultimately came to mean "lord". Langdon believes the meaning "lord" is secondary.

Like Osiris, Tammuz was carried away by the flood, as is indicated in the passage.

The flood has taken Tammuz

Mother *ušumgal* (Great Serpent) it has taken.

"In the theological lists he (Tammuz) is placed among the gods of the lower world", and Dr. Langdon says that "this type of Tammuz is the one which took over the primitive serpent worship".

Dealing with the title "Great serpent of heaven", Dr. Langdon writes:

If we may suppose that in prehistoric times, before Tammuz and Ningishzida were differentiated into two types, this ophidian deity had already been identified with Hydra (the constellation), then the name *ušumgal-anna* (Great Serpent of Heaven) is due to this connexion and not to theological speculation. In favour of an extremely ancient identification with Hydra is the fact that some of the most ancient seals represent the serpent god with a star. . . . The goddess of irrigation and the sea, Niná or Ishara, was identified with Scorpio, and perhaps also with Serpens at an extremely early date.

Another *ušumgal* (Great Serpent) of heaven and earth was the mother-goddess and consort of Enlil. She was "a special patron of birth", and was identified with Serpens in the region of Scorpio. Plato in his *Phaedo* makes Socrates describe the Greek "Dewat", Tartarus, with its whirling and panting winds and central "whirlpool lake" and its rivers forming spirals as they ascend from and descend to the central lake in the chasm.

The sage says that under the earth there are rivers of hot and cold water and of fire and mud. "A kind of oscillation within the earth moves all these up and down." There is a great chasm in the middle of the earth.

All the rivers flow together into this chasm and flow out of it again. . . . And the reason why all the streams flow in and out here is that this liquid matter has no bottom or foundation. So it oscillates and waves up and down, and the

air and wind about it do the same ; for they follow the liquid both when it moves towards the other side of the earth and when it moves towards this side, and just as the breath of those who breathe blows in and out, so the wind there oscillates with the liquid and causes terrible and irresistible blasts as it rushes in and out.

The rivers, rising from the chasm, flow round the earth and then descend in spiral fashion, "some passing around many great regions and others around fewer and smaller places" until they "flow again into Tartarus".

Some flow in on the side from which they flowed out, others on the opposite side ; and some pass completely around in a circle, coiling about the earth once or several times, like serpents, then descend to the lowest possible depth and fall again into the chasm.

There are four particularly great rivers,

the greatest and outermost of which is called Oceanus, which flows round in a circle, and, opposite this, flowing in the opposite direction is Acheron. . . . The third (Pyriphlegethon) flows out between these two. . . . After winding about many times underground, it flows into Tartarus at a lower level. . . . Opposite this the fourth river issues. . . . This is called the Stygian river, and the lake which it forms by flowing in is the Styx. . . . It passes under the earth and, circling round in the direction opposed to that of Pyriphlegethon, it meets it coming from the other way in the Acherusian lake. And the water of this river also mingles with no other water, but this also passes round in a circle and falls into Tartarus opposite Pyriphlegethon. And the name of this river is . . . Cocytus.¹

Leucippus, the Greek philosopher, who was living about 500 B.C., originated the atomic theory which he combined with the theory of the whirlpool in space. "The worlds", he said, "are produced thus: Many atoms of all manners of shapes become cut off from the infinite, and are carried into a vast void space ; there they gather together and produce one vortex"—that is, "the whole mass", as Dr. John Masson explains, "begins to go round and forms one swiftly-revolving atomic whirlpool, in the course of which the atoms are separated, and like joins like".

Democritus, who was born before 460 B.C., and died in 360 B.C., was the disciple of Leucippus, and also believed in

¹ H. N. Fowler, *Plato with an English Translation*. London and New York, 1919, pp. 383 *et seq.*

the "vortex of atoms". But Epicurus (342-270 B.C.), who borrowed much from Democritus, rejected the vortex.

As Dr. Masson says,

He dismisses with contempt the motion that nothing more is needed to explain the birth of a world than a "vortex" and "a collection of atoms". The comic poets could not have taunted him—expressly, at least—with worshipping "King Dinos" (Vortex). His own account of the origin of the germ of the world is vague enough. He can only say that "suitable atoms stream together for one or more worlds or from the spaces between the worlds", and that by degrees this nucleus is added to, and changes shape and place, and fresh matter always gathers round it.

Lucretius, the Roman philosophic poet (c. 98-55 B.C.), in his famous poem, *De Rerum Natura* (on the nature of things), favours the cosmical theories of Epicurean philosophy, but says nothing about a vortex. Our interest here is not in the atomic theory as defined by Lucretius, but it is of interest to note that after many centuries it was revived, and it "has developed", as Dr. Masson reminds us, "into that atomic theory of modern chemistry which has proved fruitful in so many fresh discoveries made both in chemistry and, in our own day, in molecular physics. . . . The atom, as described by Lucretius, in many respects closely resembles the modern chemical atom".

It may be added that the "vortex", rejected by Epicurus and ignored by Lucretius, has also come again to its own in science. Democritus applied his theory of a vortex of atoms to astronomy. If he could rise again in these days of gigantic telescopes, he would be intensely interested in the spiral nebula which "is", as Professor Holden who studied it by means of the Lick telescope, has said, "apparently composed of rings overlying each other", adding, "it is difficult to resist the conviction that these are arranged in space in the form of a true helix".

The early thinkers and observers of natural forms and processes, who introduced the spiral symbol, beginning with the snail-shell and ultimately including climbing plants, whirlpools and whirlwinds, and those who ultimately transferred these to their "sky world", have, after all, some claim to be mentioned in the history of science as well as in that of religion.

¹ J. Masson, *Lucretius, Epicurean and Poet*, London, 1907, pp. 81-2.

SECTION IV

THE SPIRAL AND BIRTH

When problems arose—Each year born anew—"Hanging out the heavens" in Egypt and India—Agni as the "navel"—The spiral in birth ceremonies—The navel as a spiral—Navel-string customs—Tattooed spirals—Polynesian souls reach sky on whirlwinds—Spirals as ears and eyes in Polynesia—Navel as source of "air of life"—Heart and breath—Navels of sky and earth—"Great Bear" as navel—Brahma born from Vishnu's navel—Sacred cities as "navels"—Navel, bowels and heart—"Heart and Reins"—Kidneys as "Great Bear"—Gods as "Hearts" and "Bowels" of sky—Buddha and coiled serpents—"Whirlwind" and "Heart of all serpents"—Spiral hair knots—Soul departs through hair spiral—Ear and spiral—Birth of year a crisis.

When the early thinkers began to formulate myths to account for the origin of things, they did not attempt to rid their minds of inherited speculations, childish or otherwise. They clung to the birth-promoting shells, to the first goose that laid the first egg, and the first egg from which the goose came, to the mother cow, to the lotus which seemed to be a product of water, to the house pillar, which they transferred to the sky as a support, to the spine symbol (mountains and pillars were "spines") and so on.

They conceived of a god who ruled the world as a chief, or king, and a law-giver. They thus transferred their own king to the sky. The god was supposed to have shaped the world as an artizan, or with the assistance of his artizans. Another idea was that the god created things by working magic like a "medicine man".

But, as has been emphasized, before the early thinkers speculated regarding origins, they had measured the year. They then discovered that there were problems to solve—problems regarding which the hunters had never dreamed of, whose very existence they had never imagined. They became greatly concerned regarding the natural forces manifested in the various seasons which caused seed to sprout, and crops to grow and ripen.

In Egypt the year was first measured by the Nile, which is low during the hot season, then rises in flood to usher in the cool season of growth and fertility, and then gradually falls again. When they had detected the connexion between the heavenly bodies and the seasons, and sub-divided the year with the aid of the moon and certain groups of stars, and ultimately discovered that the sun measured the year, they believed that the controlling force was in the sky. Then they saw in the sky not only the Nile, but also their mother cow, their house pillars, their cackling goose, and so on. They believed that each year was "hatched", or born, or called into existence on New Year's day.

In ancient Egypt the birth of the year took place when the Nile began to rise in flood. Elsewhere, after the introduction of the agricultural mode of life, or the beliefs issuing from an area where the agricultural mode of life obtained, the year began at the Spring equinox. Sir James G. Frazer refers in this connexion to the view of "the learned ecclesiastical historian Mgr. Duchesne", who has pointed out that according to an ancient belief "the world began and the sun and moon were created at the spring equinox". A sect of the Montanists dated the equinox on the twenty-fourth of March.¹ Budge,² dealing with the Egyptian festivals at Henen-su writes in regard to the birth of the new year :

Other festivals were those of Bast, which were celebrated in the spring of the Egyptian year and those of the "hanging out of the heavens", *i.e.*, the supposed reconstituting of the heavens each year in the spring.

The god Khnemu, as King of the south and north, was as the "virile Ram" with four heads, the fertilizer of Egypt and he formed "the breath of life". He was ultimately solarized, but the four rams and the ram with "four faces (or heads) on one neck",³ may have originally been a symbol of the four cardinal points. Sir James Frazer also refers to the Egyptian belief that the creation of the world took place "at the rising of Sirius", which "in antiquity fell on the 20th of July".⁴

¹ *The Golden Bough* (*Adonis, Attis, Osiris* vol. (1907 edition), p. 258).

² *The Gods of the Egyptians*, II, 63.

³ Budge, *op. cit.*, II, 64, 65.

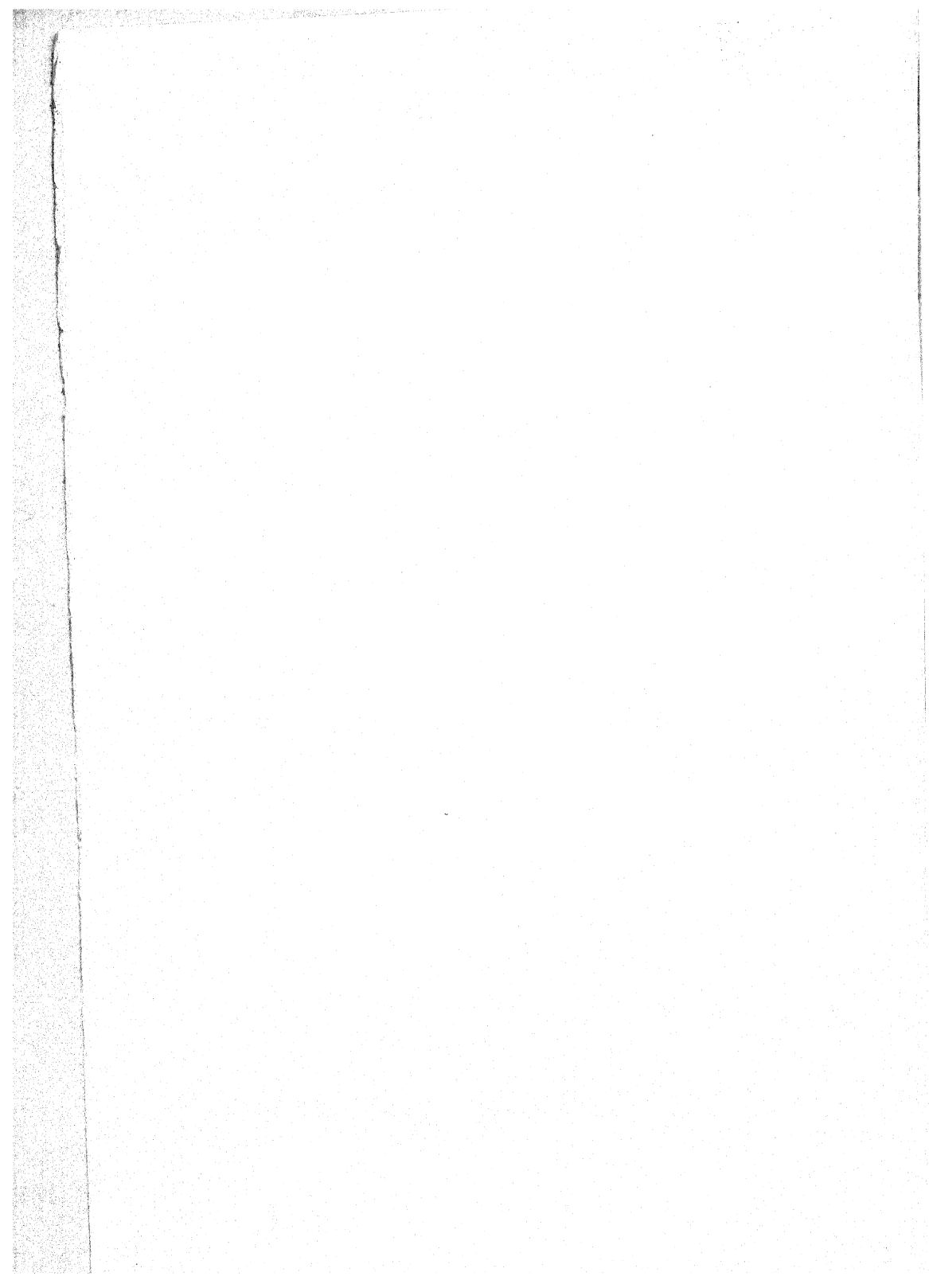
⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 258. Note 2.

PLATE X



ARTEMIS ON SPOTTED ANTELOPE.

(From Greek vase.)



The idea that the world was re-born each year is found in Sanskrit literature. Muir writes in this connexion :

Agni . . . is described in some passages as the offspring of heaven and earth ; he is said in other places to have stretched them out ; to have spread out the two worlds like two skins ; . . . to have kept asunder the two worlds . . . to adorn the heaven with stars. He is the head and summit of the sky, the centre¹ of the earth.²

Indra similarly "filled the terrestrial region". In the *Rigveda* (I, 103, 2) it is said of him :

He established the earth and stretched it out ; smiting with the thunderbolt, he let loose the waters.³

That the spiral was a birth symbol is suggested by the Hindu evidence regarding Agni as the "navel," and the text which, as has been shown, makes the whirlpool "enclose the embryo (offspring)".

A red spiral, a Hindu friend informs me, is painted on Hindu bedroom doors when a birth is about to take place, while the birth amulets include whorled shells which are placed in and outside the bedroom, to assist birth. It is believed that the symbol and amulets will cause the child to perform the necessary spiral movement before birth. According to Celtic belief it should turn sunwise—that is, to the right like the seasons-controlling constellation, the Great Bear. Even food was supposed, when swallowed, to proceed "to the right." In Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland* (1794, XI, 620, *et seq.*) the minister of the parish of Callander in Perthshire, writes :

When a Highlander goes to bathe, or to drink waters out of a consecrated fountain, he must always approach by going round the place from East to West on the South side . . . This is called in Gaelic going round the right or the lucky way. The opposite course is the wrong, or the unlucky way. And if a person's meat or drink were to affect the wind-pipe, or come against his breath, they instantly cry out "desheal"⁴ which is an ejaculation, praying that it may go by the right way.

¹ *Nabhi* (navel) is the word used here.

² Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, pp. 214, *et seq.*

³ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 100.

⁴ Gaelic word spelled as pronounced.

Even when the spiral may be rare, or absent in a local religious art, it does not follow that no beliefs connected with it were in existence. The whorled shell might be used as an amulet to provide the necessary magical symbol. The use of the shell persisted long after the solar cult had absorbed earlier beliefs and conceptions regarding birth and creation. In pre-Columbian Mexico :

They believed that the moon presided over human generation and accordingly they always put it by the sign of the sun. They placed on its head a sea-snail to denote that in the same way as the marine animal creeps from its integument or shell, so man comes from his mother's womb.¹

The spiral form assumed by the healed navel of the child did not escape attention. Sir James G. Frazer has shown that the customs connected with the disposal of the navel string and after-birth are similar in various parts of the world—in every continent, in fact, including America, among the Aztecs, Incas and Red Indians, as among the Africans and Europeans and Asiatics.² The Maoris of New Zealand hung navel strings on trees, and in the Tuhoe tribe "the power of making women fruitful is ascribed to trees. These trees are associated with the navel-strings of definite mythical ancestors. . . . A barren woman had to embrace such a tree in her arms, and she received a male or female child according as she embraced the east or the west side".³ Here, again, the spiral can be connected with the doctrine of the cardinal points—with the cross symbol and the swastika symbol, the navel string being the "double" of the spiral-formed navel. The male swastika pointed east and the female west. We should not, therefore, be too ready to accept the superficial theory of Mr. Andrew Lang that the magical spiral which the Maori warrior had tattooed on his face and carved on his implements was of spontaneous generation in New Zealand and that (to parody the poet):

A spiral on his visage dim,
A fern unfolding was to him,
And it was nothing more.

¹ Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*. Vol. VI (Translation of the explanation of the paintings of Codex Vaticanus), p. 203.

² *The Magic Art*, Vol. I, 182 *et seq.*

³ Authorities quoted in *The Magic Art*, Vol. II, p. 56.

Tattooing was, all through Oceania, a necessary and religious custom. After death the soul was directed to the particular Paradise indicated by tattoo marks. A fearsome hag met the soul in mid ocean "and searched it for the marks of the tattooing needle; these she scraped away with her long nails, and swallowed, saying, 'Pass from Maura, land of the living, to Bouro, land of the dead'. Then she touched the soul's eyes with her hand, thus bestowing on them the vision of spirits. . . . But if she found no tattoo-marks, since food she must have, she plucked out the pupils of the souls' eyes and devoured them, and some say that the soul went blind thereafter, and never came to the land of Bouro. . . ."¹

As has been stated, the Maori believed that the souls of their dead returned to the Polynesian homeland of Irihia (which some think is India and others, Indonesia), some to ascend to the sky Paradise "by means of the gyrating whirlwind". Those with spirals tattooed on their faces probably belonged to the sky-cult and ascended on spirals of air. The Polynesian spiral may therefore have been imported from the Polynesian homeland with the many complex beliefs and customs associated with it. From that homeland the Polynesian mariners set out on their wanderings in such excellent vessels that they were able to accomplish voyages of from 2,000 to 4,000 miles.²

The Maori warriors who had their bodies tattooed were not concerned about "art motifs". One is reminded in this connexion of the visit to England over a century ago of Tupai Kupa, the Maori. His portrait was painted by his friend John Sylvester, but although the likeness seemed to be a good one, he declared "That not me"! Then he drew his own "portrait" here reproduced, showing the tattoo symbols on his face.

"Tupai Kupa", writes Leo Frobenius, "gave the name and the significance of each flourish, related the occasions when they were severally applied, and sketched the patterns of all the noble families. But, unfortunately, all the reporters of the occurrence have only recorded the incidents as such, without the details of Tupai Kupa's explanations. We know, however, that in the central islands of Polynesia, it was

¹ J. G. Frazer (quoting authorities), *The Belief in Immortality*. Vol. III, pp. 50 *et seq.* London, 1924.

² For evidence in this connexion see S. Percy Smith's *Hawaiki: The Original Home of the Maori* (4th edition). Auckland, New Zealand, 1921.

customary to have his tutelary deity or sacred animal tattooed on each person; we know that on festive occasions the tokens



FIG. 38.

The Maori Tupai Kupa's drawing of his own face.

were recorded on the breast of all the participators, and we find the same rite in Africa, as, for instance, with the western Niam-Niams".¹

Ruth H. Greiner, who has made an intensive study of Polynesian and Melanesian symbols, shows that they appear on house posts, canoes and paddles, war clubs, bowls, handles of implements, in tattoo schemes, etc. Some of the highly conventionalized symbols represent plant forms, fish,

birds, lizards, human figures, etc. Spirals sometimes represent the ears and eyes of a "tiki".²

The belief that vital energy existed in or entered through the spiral-shaped navel is of very special interest. Behind the world-wide custom of carefully disposing of the navel string and placenta, lay the belief that the latter was the child's double (the Egyptian "Ka"). If anything happened to these, the child suffered loss of vitality. Sir James G. Frazer gives a number of instances of this widespread belief.³

In the Hindu sacred work *Bhâgavata-purâna*,⁴ the navel is connected with the breath of life and ascetics in their religious breathing exercises were supposed to realize this, as the following passage shows clearly:

Drawing the vital breath from the navel into his heart, let the Solitary cause it to rise thence by the way of the air called Udâna into his breast. Then, mastering his attention, and uniting the breath of life to his intelligence, he brings it little by little, to the root of his palate, etc.

¹ *The Childhood of Man* (English translation) by A. H. Keane, London, 1909, pp. 34-6.

² *Polynesian Decorative Designs*. (Bernice P. Bishop, Museum Bulletin 7.) Honolulu, Hawaii, 1923.

³ *The Magic Art*, Vol. I, pp. 182 *et seq.*

⁴ Burnouf's translation, I, 108.

Mr. Rhys Davids has shown that in an ancient commentary on the Vedic sacrifice, the *Brahmana of the Hundred Paths*, the heart is referred to as "the breath", the explanation being "since it is from it that the breath moves upwards and the very animal is breath, for only so long does the animal live as it breathes".¹

Both the earth and sky were supposed to have navels. In Pliny's *Natural History*², the "theory of winds" is dealt with. The winds were supposed to exercise an influence on growth, conception and birth. Pliny explains how the "cardinal line" should be drawn through a field. One is to take up position in doing so with the east as his right and the west as his left. From his shadow at the sixth hour of the day he must trace a line twenty feet in length.

In the middle of this line, or, in other words, at the tenth foot in it, a small circle must then be drawn: to this circle we may give the name of the "umbilicus" or "navel". That point in the line which lies on the side of the head of the shadow will be the point from which the north wind blows. . . . That part of the line which lies between the "umbilicus" and the feet of the shadow will look towards the south and indicate the point from which the south wind blows.

Details are given regarding the characters of the various winds. Flocks must not be fed with their faces to the north, for the north wind injures their eyes. "If you wish to have females, you should let the dams have their faces towards the north while being covered."

In the Aryo-Indian sacred book, the "Rig-veda", occur the passages:

Mighty Agni, stationed on the navel of the Earth, in the form of the firmament. . . . the friendly and adorable Agni who breathes in mid-heaven (II, 333). I ask what is the uttermost end of the earth; this sacrifice is the navel of the world (II, 138). Agni placed his strength upon the navel of the world³ (II, 76). Present oblations in the three high places upon the navel of the Earth (II, 218).

"Those which are the Seven Rays, in them is my nave expanded" (I, 272) may refer to the Great Bear constellation

¹ *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, 1911, p. 104.

² Book XVIII, Chapter 76 (33). Bostock & Riley's translation, London, 1856.

³ The sacrifice on the altar.

the navel of the northern sky which controls the winds and the seasons.

Brahma was supposed, according to a well-known Hindu cult or myth, to have had his origin in a lotus which grew out of the navel of the god Vishnu.

The Sanskrit word for navel is *nābhi*. It was used in the sense of "middle", and the fifth month was called *nabha* or *nabhas*, the sixth being *nabhasya*. The nave of a wheel was the *nabhya*, and the year wheel had three naves, or navels (three seasons); the shafts of a cart are in one of the hymns "compared with the transverse process of a vertebra". A rishi called "Nabhāka" was credited with the creation of several hymns of the *Rigveda*. Macdonell and Keith note that *nābhi* "develops from the literal sense of navel". *Nabhā-nedistha* means "nearest in descent", or as Roth has it "nearest in birth". In Gaelic *imleag* or *iomlag* (navel) is used in the sense of "centre". *Iom* means "round", and a whirlwind is *iomghaoth*, while *iomlath* is a rolling, a turning, a winding. A standing image is *iomhaigh*. Dr. Macbain derives *imleag* from an earlier *embilion* and compares it with the Latin *umbilicus*. Greek *ομφαλός* and Sanskrit *nābhi*.

The sacred cities and sites of many ancient cults were supposed to be situated on the "navel" of the earth. Cuzco, the Inca capital, was the "navel" and Jerusalem, Athens, etc. were supposed to mark the "navel".

The navel was connected with the bowels, and the Japanese *hara*, belly, is used like our word "heart" for centre, but it is also "mind". Various peoples regard the belly as the seat of life and intelligence. To the Egyptians of the Pyramid Age, the "heart" or the "belly" furnished the chief designations for the intelligence.¹ The "heart and reins" occur frequently in sacred Hebrew literature.² In ancient times the heart, liver, kidneys and bowels were referred to as the seat of life as the heart alone now is. But each of the separate organs had their symbolic significance. Rhys Davids quotes in this connexion from the Hindu Atharva Veda (VII, 96-1):

The kine have sat in their seat; the bird has flown to its nest; the mountains have stood firm in their site; I have made the two kidneys stand in their station.

¹ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

² The problem is discussed by several writers in the *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, 1911, pp. 41 *et seq.*

When a Brahman was cremated the left kidney of a sacrificed animal was placed in his left hand and the right kidney in his right hand. In ancient Iran the kidneys belonged to "Haptōiring, who is the constellation Ursa Major, 'the chieftain of the North'".¹

The "heart" and "bowels" were referred to in the New World as in the Old in connexion with the Universe and the deities.

The Quiche-Cakchiquel people of Guatemala worshipped the God Gucumatz and called their monarch Gucumatz. This deity was the god of "the four ends of heaven" (the four cardinal points), and sent tempests, thunder and rain. He was, in short, the controller of the seasons and a personification of natural energy, and was known as "Heart of Heaven", "Bowels of Heaven" and "Bowels of Earth". The Maya god Votan was similarly "the Heart", as his name indeed signifies. The Mixtecs of Central America had in a cave at Achiuhtla a transparent stone (*chalchihuitl*) round which a serpent curved in spiral form. The serpent's head pointed towards a small bird. This group was adored as "Heart of the People". According to Burgoa the earth was supposed to be "supported" by this "Heart". Apparently it was also the source of Natural Energy, or the magical symbol of that source and of the energy itself.² The serpent may have been of similar significance to the Chinese red dragon which was seen "coiling and revolving" before the birth of the Emperor Wu. It coiled and revolved because it was inaugurating a new era. As the revolving dragon it inaugurated each spring a new year.

The nāga (serpent god) was, as De Visser shows, the dragon of India. Northern Buddhists absorbed much of early Hindu nāga lore. Indeed, the nāgas and their bird enemies, the garudas, became worshippers of Buddha.

In the fifth week after reaching perfect Enlightenment the Buddha went to lake Mucilinda, and the nāga king of the same name, who resided there, came out of the water and with his coils and hoods shielded the Lord from the rain for seven days, whereafter he assumed the shape of a youth and worshipped the Great Being.

¹ *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, 1911, pp. 100-*et seq.*

² *Myths of Pre-Columbian America*, pp. 265-66.

The Nāga, delighted to see the new Buddha's light, arose from the water, and, surrounding the Lord with seven coils, covered him with his seven heads. The Nāga, delighted, caused wind and rain for seven days and nights.¹

The Nāgas which worshipped Buddha and formed spirals round his body were producers of pearls and gems. Buddha, himself, was sometimes identified with the gem. His particular gem was ultimately the diamond, and the diamond was identified with the rain-bringing thunderbolt.²

Rain was supposed to come from the "heart" of the Nāga (serpent dragon) and Buddhists Sutras were recited to cause rain. "The Sutra of the Great Cloud" was specially effective and there are Chinese translations of it. The "Great Cloud-circle (or wheel)" rite was performed. De Visser, describing the rite, goes on to refer to the "Whirlwind" chapter, also called "The Heart of All Serpents", which was recited so that the gem-guarding nāgas might send rain.³ A similar ceremony obtained in Japan. The Zenshu Buddhists of Japan strove to arrive at *Bushin*, the "inmost heart of Buddha". Indeed, "the Essence of Zenshuism is the 'Heart of Buddha'".⁴

Here, then, we have, in Buddhist lore, the serpent-dragon in spiral form figuring as the "Heart", as in the cave of the Mixtecs at Achiuhtla in Central America. The spiral is also connected with the whirlwind as the "Whirlwind" chapter indicates, and with the thunderbolt gem, a symbol of the four quarters and also of the sun. In short, the spiral as the "Heart" is the life-sustaining symbol of the Universe—the source of energy, law, fruitfulness and all blessings, and therefore in Buddhism of all that is good and perfect.

The spiral was connected not only with the heart, navel, bowels, the coiled serpent dragon, etc., but also with the head. "Two of the Vedic deities, Rudra and Pūshan, are", wrote Dr. Muir, "said to wear their hair wound or braided spirally upwards into the form of a shell", as the word *Kapardin* shows. The priests of the family of Vasishtha had spiral hair knots on the right side of their heads.

¹ De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, pp. 10, 11.

² B. Laufer, *The Diamond* (Field Museum of Natural History Publication 184). Chicago, 1915, pp. 17, 25.

³ *The Dragon in China and Japan*, pp. 27 et seq.

⁴ *Translations of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. XXXV, part II, p. 218 (Tokyo, 1908).

The god Pūshan was "the lord of all things moving and stationary", "the inspirer of the soul", "bestower of food", "protector and multiplier of cattle", "the supporter of the sky", etc., and there are references to "Pūshan's wheel", while he is the charioteer who drives "the golden wheel of the sun" and "the messenger of the sun", and is possessed of "golden ships" which "sail across the aerial ocean". Rudra is chief of the Rudras or Maruts, the gods of rain, tempest and whirlwinds.¹

Mr. Evans refers to the belief still prevalent in the Malay peninsula that the soul leaves the body through the spiral formed by braided hair.²

The spirits, which leave their bodies at death by the whorl of hair at the back of the head, pass to the west and try to get into heaven by the gate at which the souls of Malays enter. This they cannot do, so they go round by another way, etc.

The soul is weighed "in a pair of scales".

The goddess Minerva, it will be recalled, sprang from the head of Jupiter.

Professor Elliot Smith has collected some remarkable evidence with regard to the connexion of the spiral with the ears of gods, kings and rain-bringing animals and reptiles.³ He finds the ear spiral on the elephant figures of the pre-Columbian stela at Copan in Central America, on the macaw figures, on the Hindu god Indra's elephant from Delhi, on the side of the "Phrygian cap" of the Maya god, or priest, "seated on a two-headed lion couch", etc., and writes :

The use of such a spiral ornament, especially in representations of the elephant, is of widespread occurrence in the Old World . . . The fact that the crude sketches of Indian elephants found in Scandinavia and Scotland present a spiral ornament can hardly be a merely accidental coincidence.

He shows that on Greek coins the elephant's head was used as a head-dress of kings who also wore the curved horn of Amon, the Egyptian god, which formed a spiral about or behind the ear, or in front of the ear. In this connexion, as has been noted, he accepts the view of Mr. Cook that the curved Amon

¹ Muirs *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V, pp. 171 *et seq.*, and 462.

² *Religion, Folklore and Customs in North Borneo and the Malay*. Cambridge 1923, pp. 208-9.

³ *Elephants and Ethnologists*, pp. 83 *et seq.*

horn was taken over by the Asiatic thunder god and suggests that the spiral consequently became a thunder symbol.

The problem involved is a difficult one. It would be rash to limit the extent of the area over which this particular form of the spiral extended. That it gave origin to the Chinese thunder spiral is, as already indicated, somewhat doubtful. But it may have been absorbed in the Chinese complex and it may have travelled further afield by another route.

The connexion between the spiral and ear will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter. Here the Chinese thunder spiral may be further considered. As has been shown, there is textual authority for insisting on the Chinese spiral's connexion with thunder, but there is also textual authority for connecting the spiral with the dragon, which when seen "coiling and revolving" was regarded as a good omen. There is also Chinese textual authority for connecting the spiral with the pearl, the moon and the sun.

The dragon was closely associated with water as a rain-bringer. It dwelt in pools or in caves in which there were "dragon pools". During the winter it slept and was a "water confiner", and it awoke and was seen "coiling and revolving" it was apparently regarded, like the whirlpool in India, as a creative force "enclosing the offspring (embryo)". The vitalizing pearl, which figures so prominently in Chinese religious literature, was connected with the dragon. The *Shuh i Ki* states that "dragon pearls are spit out by dragons", like "snake-pearls by snakes". Whirlwinds—spiral gusts—were in Japan, as stated, "dragon rolls", caused by dragons "winding their way to the sky amidst thunder and rain".

It was in spring—at the birth of the year—that the dragons awoke, rose in the air, caused thunder and sent rain. Here then we have the spiral as a symbol of birth as well as of thunder. Indeed, we have also thunder as a manifestation of birth—the birth of the year. The spiral as a Chinese thunder symbol therefore meant more to the ancient Chinese than is to be gleaned from an isolated text. When Ko Hung wrote that "a spiral denotes the rolling thunder from which issues a flash of lightning",² he evidently regarded thunder and

¹ De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, p. 88.

² Here lightning is a fertilizing agency, like the ray of light which fell from the moon and caused Osiris to be born. There are many Chinese stories of like character.

lightning in a sense which can be understood only by reference to Chinese dragon literature as a whole.

The birth of each year was anciently regarded as a crisis. It was believed that human aid was required. Magical and magico-religious ceremonies were therefore performed to assist Nature to perform its proper functions. If these ceremonies were not observed, the drought or frosts and storms of the barren season might continue. Traces of this ancient belief are found in the myths of various countries. In the Highlands of Scotland there is much lore regarding the Winter goddess who beats the ground with her hammer so as to harden it with her frost and "prevent the grass growing"; she also raises wild storms to keep apart the lovers who are to issue in the period of fertility. The goddess is anxious to prolong her reign—to establish an eternal winter in the world.

Eternal winter prevailed, according to Scandinavian mythology, until Ymir was slain and ground on the World Mill. When this was accomplished, the world was shaped and set in order. This Mill, as we have seen, was kept revolving by giant maids. But when a war broke out between the gods and giants, the maids espoused the cause of their kinsmen. Rydberg summarizes the myths in this connexion as follows :

They (the giant maids) gave the World mill so rapid a motion that the foundations of the earth trembled, pieces of the mill-stone were broken loose and thrown into space. . . . This could not happen without harm to the starry canopy of heaven which rested thereon. . . . A storm with mighty thundering passed over the country, the earth quaked and cast up large stones. . . . The giant maids betook themselves to the earth and took part in the first world-war on the side hostile to Odin. It is worthy of notice that the mythology has connected the fimbul-winter and the great emigration from the north with an earthquake and a damage to the world-mill which makes the starry heavens revolve.¹

There are traces in ancient Persian religion of a belief in a prolonged and terrible winter which caused Yima to build, on Ahura's suggestion, "the Vara . . . to shelter mankind and animals". Professor Moulton commented that "the picture strongly tempts us to recognize the influence of the Babylonian flood story".²

¹ Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 398-9.

² *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*. Cambridge, 1911, p. 156.

In Egypt the "flood myth" was connected with the sacrifice of human beings for the purpose of vitalizing the chief deity.¹ Hathor as Sekhet, the slayer, was propitiated by floods of beer mixed with blood and a red substance. She drank and was intoxicated. The ancient Egyptians celebrated her festival, which was held on their New Year's day to celebrate the birth of the year, by drinking heavily of intoxicating beer in imitation of Hathor. The sun-god Re (or Ra) had ascended to the sky and the myth proceeds:

His majesty—to whom Life! Prosperity! Health! spake:
 "Let there be set a great field, and there appeared the Field of Rest. 'I will gather plants in it,' and there appeared the Field of Aaru (Aalu); 'Therein do I gather as its inhabitants things which hang from heaven, even the stars'".

The god Shu is ordered to unite with Nut, the sky goddess. Wiedemann explains that "Shu is appointed by Ra to be a light to men upon earth; he is installed by the old sun as the new".² The heavens and earth are re-organized and a new year is ushered in. The god had ruled as a Pharaoh on earth and went to the sky world to supplant the old sun.

In Gaelic lore there are two suns—the small sun of winter and the big sun of summer.

¹ Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, pp. 192 et seq.

² Wiedemann, *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 63.

SECTION V

THE SACRED CIRCUIT

The Dancing and Revolving Sun—Winter Solstice Ceremony—Quarter days—The Course of Nature—Left-hand circuit—Birds that fly sunwise—Highland, Irish, Gaulish, Buddhist and Homeric customs—English mistletoe dance—Dancing Greeks—Hindu customs—Ocean flowing from left to right around the world—Circulating dwelling houses—Masonic spiral staircase—Hindu priests' circuit—Evil Eye customs—Top spinning—Serpent spirals—Left-hand circuit as Ceremony of Riddance—Egyptian examples—Hindu movements explained—The Wishing Maidens—Borneo expulsion ceremony—Spiral on wand—Pig calls spirits—Women dance from left to right—Omens of Death—The Witches' dance—Ecstatic dances—Sun as "magic tank"—Sacred circle—Palæolithic dances—Sun cult in Palæolithic times.

The ancient custom of making a sacred circuit to the right appears to have been intended to stimulate the Great Bear (*Ursa Major*) constellation to revolve in the proper direction. There was a danger—so it was believed—that it might jam, or else spin in the wrong direction.

The stellar cult's belief in this connexion was taken over by the sun cult, and it can still be detected as an "import". In the Scottish Highlands, for instance, the newly-born sun of Summer—the "big sun"¹—is supposed to "dance" and whirl round three times to the right on May Day (Beltane). The sun thus imitates the "dancing Dervishes" who gave the "Great Bear" a lead.

In Arizona the Navaho Red Indians dance to stop the sun at the winter solstice, lest it should move too far southward.² Evidently they had taken over an ancient ceremony of the sun cult. But, as we have seen, they, too, had stellar beliefs, and placed their "whirling logs" in the north of the sky.

In Gaelic lore there are interesting references to the ceremonies which were performed not only at the birth of the year, but at the births of the seasons. At the end of each quarter, it

¹ The winter sun is the "little sun".

² G. A. Dorsey, *Indians of the South-West*. Chicago, 1903, pp. 132 *et seq.*

was believed, the forces of evil were let loose. Men and animals had to be protected against fairies, demons, witches, etc. It was during these occasions of seasonal change that "fairy raids" took place. The Rev. John G. Campbell, of Tiree, has written in this connexion :

The seasons on which their (the fairies') festivities are held are the last night of every quarter, particularly the nights before Beltane (May-day) the first of summer, and Hallowmass, the first of winter. . . . On the last night of the year they are kept out by decorating the house with holly ; and the last handful of corn reaped should be dressed up as a Harvest Maiden, and hung up in the farmer's house to aid in keeping them out till next harvest.¹

The ceremony of encircling sacred objects and places was sometimes a spiral movement. It is of widespread character and great antiquity and appears to have originated in the belief, above referred to, that it was necessary to stimulate the Great Bear to revolve in the right direction at the beginning of the new year, and also at the beginning of each season. By following the course of nature, the magic-workers not only assisted nature, as they believed, but procured for themselves an accumulation of "good luck"—that is, everything man desired, health, food, prosperity, etc. ; by inverting the course of nature the magic-workers either performed a ceremony of riddance, or invoked the forces of evil.

The former ceremony is in Gaelic called *Deiseal*—the right-hand turn. This word "is", says Campbell of Tiree, "from *deas*, right-hand, and *iul*, direction, and of itself contains no allusion to the sun.

The latter ceremony is called *Tuaitheal*—that is, tuathuil (the left-hand direction), the backward, ominous, unlucky movement which in Braid Scots is known as "widdershins", "withershins", "witherwise", etc.

M. Martin, the seventeenth-century traveller, wrote in his *Western Isles* in connexion with the right-hand ceremonial movement :

The monk O¹ Gorgon is buried near to this chapel (on the little island of Fladda Chuan, i.e., ("Fladda of the Ocean"), and there is a stone five feet high at each end of his grave. There is abundance of sea-fowl that come to hatch their young

¹ *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Glasgow, 1900, pp. 19-20.

in the isle; the coulter-nebs are very numerous here; it comes in the middle of March, and goes away in the middle of August; it makes a tour round the isle sunways, before it settles on the ground, and another at going away in August; which ceremony is much approved by the tenant of the isle, and is one of the chief arguments he made use of for making the like round, as he sets out to sea with his boat.¹

When a Roman Catholic priest consecrated St. Katherine's Well on the island of Eigg, after saying mass,

he gave each of the inhabitants a piece of wax candle, which they lighted, and all of them made the dessil, of going round the well sunways, the priest leading them: and from that time it was accounted unlawful to boil any meat with the water of this well.²

Martin records also with regard to the island of South Uist:

There are several big cairns of stone on the east side of this island, and the vulgar retain the ancient custom of making a religious tour round them on Sundays and holidays (holy days.)³

As these cairns are graves, it is of interest to note that in Tibet, as in ancient India, the Buddhists erected circular galleries round *stupas* (tombs of holy men), so that they might be walked round sunwise by pilgrims.⁴ It may be recalled, too, that in the *Iliad* (Book XXIII, 1 *et seq.*) Achilles calls upon the Myrmidons to go with him and mourn for and honour Patroklos:

So thrice around the dead they drave their well-maned steeds, moaning; and Thetis stirred among them desire of wailing.⁵

Martin writes further regarding the Hebridean right-hand movement:

Some of the poorer sort of people in the Western Isles retain the custom of performing these circles sunways about the persons of their benefactors three times, when they bless them, and wish good success to all their enterprises. Some are very careful, when they set out to sea, that the boat be first rowed about sunways; and if this be neglected they are afraid

¹ 1884 edition, p. 167.

² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴ W. Simpson, *The Buddhist Praying Wheel*, pp. 29-32. London, 1895.

⁵ Lang, Leaf and Myers translation, London, 1914, p. 450.

their voyage may prove unfortunate. I had the ceremony paid me when in the isle of Islay, by a poor woman after I had given her an alms. I desired her to let alone that compliment, for that I did not care for it; but she insisted to make these three ordinary turns, and then prayed that God, and MacCharmaig, the patron saint of that island, might bless and prosper me in all my affairs.

A similar ceremony was performed by Vercingetorix, the Gaulish leader when he made submission to Julius Cæsar at Alesia. "Vercingetorix", says Plutarch, "armed himself and equipped his horse in the most magnificent manner, and then sallied out at the gate. After he had taken some circuits about Cæsar, as he sat upon the tribunal, Vercingetorix dismounted, put off his armour, and placed himself at Cæsar's feet, where he remained in profound silence, till Cæsar ordered a guard to take him away, and keep him for his own triumph".

In Irish the sacred circuit is called "dessel", or "deisol", "right-hand-wise". Joyce reminds us that the custom "is very ancient, and, like many others, has descended from pagan to Christian times. It was, indeed, quite as common among the Christian people of Ireland as among the pagans; and no wonder; for the great apostle Patrick, as well as several other eminent Irish saints, showed them the example, For instance, St. Patrick consecrated Armagh, as St. Senan did Scatterry Island, each by walking sunwise with his followers in solemn procession round the site".¹

It was customary in early Christian times for an Irish chief to carry to battle a consecrated relic in the hope that it would ensure victory. "Such a relic", says Joyce, "was called a 'cathach' [caha], i.e. 'prœliator' or 'battler'. The usual formula for the use of the 'cathach' was to cause it to be carried 'deisoil' or sunwise—commonly by an ecclesiastic—three times round the army before the battle began."²

The custom is referred to as a "heathenish" one in the minutes of the Presbytery of Dingwall, Ross and Cromartyshire, which deal with the sacrificing of bulls, etc., in the parish of Gairloch during the seventeenth century. It is stated that the Highlanders were guilty of "frequent approaches to some ruinous chappels and circulateing of them".

¹ P. W. Joyce, *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*. London, 1906, pp. 127-8.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5.

J. F. Campbell in his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* gives a number of instances of the custom :

Every English sailor coils a rope sunwise ; but I have never been able to find out that he alters the direction of his coil when he crosses the line, and ought to coil it the other way. . . . Girls dance in a circle, and all England commonly dances in a circle about the mistletoe when we dance the old year out and the new year in.

He refers to dancers who " move to the left " and thinks this is " sunwise and planetwise, if the earth be the centre intended ". But it may have been a relic of the ancient undoing ceremony—the ceremony of riddance. Campbell continues :

Long ago when in Greece I came upon a lot of peasants dressed in their white kilts, performing their dances. Men and women held hands in a circle, advanced and retreated, and moved slowly round to a very monotonous music, while every now and then one of them broke out into a fit of violent whirlings and eccentric whirlings in the midst, which, if originally astronomical, must have symbolized a comet.¹

Elsewhere these " eccentric whirlings " are spiral movements and they may have been the same in Greece. Campbell goes on to refer to the custom of the Faroe islanders whom he saw going round a room by the right as they sang " old heroic ballads in their old Norse tongue ". Campbell notes :

When we waltz we go sunwise round the ballroom, when we go round in a reel we do the same, and start with the right foot. The wine bottle and the whisky noggin both circulate sunwise about the table. Lawyers in their revels used to hold hands and dance thrice round the sea-coal fire in the Inner Temple Hall (London), according to ancient usage. Boys hold hands and dance round bonfires. . . . Another amusement is to whirl a lighted stick so as to produce a circle of fire but that is forbidden by old (Gaelic) dames, who say, " Tha e air chrosadh ", " It is crossed ", or " forbidden ".²

When Moslem pilgrims visit Mecca they walk round the Kaabah from left to right seven times, and the ceremony is known as the " Tawaf ".³

In Sanskrit the sunwise circuit to the right is known as *pradakshina* and the opposite circuit to the left was *prasavya*.

¹ The ancient Greeks performed the sunways movement.

² J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, Vol. IV, pp. 287 *et seq.* (1893 edition).

³ Burton's *Pilgrimage*, Vol. III, pp. 204 *et seq.* and 234 *et seq.*

Fires, altars, tombs and sacred buildings were "circulated". A bride went three times round the house fire.¹ In Rome the bridal pair went sunwise round the family altar. The Brahman priests performed both movements, and these are referred to in Sanskrit sacred works. "From left to right (he sprinkles) ; hence the ocean flows round these worlds from left to right" is a significant text.² The sprinkling of holy water was a rain-bringing ceremony. The priest sprinkled a stone and the explanation runs :

"The food that is lying in the rock, in the mountain" ; for that food, water, is indeed contained in the rock, in the mountains "the drink that is gathered from waters, plants and trees" ;—for from all that drink is indeed gathered ;—"that sap and food bring ye unto us, O Maruts, as bountiful givers" !—for the Maruts are the rulers of the rain.³

The rites performed, including circulating, were for the purpose of ensuring that the influences emanating from the "magic tank" of Nature would "flow" forth at the proper time.

In the Highlands of Scotland the custom still obtained in some areas in the writer's boyhood of circulating a dwelling house "for luck". He has seen in Argyllshire an elderly man performing the rite. This worthy first circulated the fire which was in the middle of the room, and then passing out of doors walking round his house by the left and in spiral fashion, moving outwards, three times ; then he paused, turned round slowly three times and walked inwards in spiral fashion, and having re-entered the house and once circulated his fire by the right, seated himself, remarking, "That will bring me what I want".

Freemasons are familiar with the spiral movement by the right round the oblong chequered floor or carpet of the lodge room. Initiates are conducted in this circuit. They reach something by the "spiral staircase" in one of the degrees. There are undoubtedly wonderful Old-World survivals in the ancient craft, the teachings of which are of the deepest interest to the brethren.

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIX, p. 213.

² Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana* (Sacred Books of the East), Vol. XLIII p. 169.

³ *Ibid*, XLIII, p. 170.

The inward spiral movement was observed by Brahmans in India in connexion with the ceremony of laying down the altar bricks at the four cardinal points and then at the centre. It is dealt with in that lengthy Sanskrit work the *Satapatha Brahmana*¹ :

He (the priest) places them (the bricks) in the (four) quarters : for that firmament, the world of heaven is the quarters ; he thus establishes them in the world of heaven. On the range of the Ritavyās (he places them) : for the Ritavyās (seasonal bricks) are the year : it is in the world of heaven he thus establishes them. Within the stomabhâgâs² (he places them) ; for this is the firmament, the world of heaven ; it is therein he thus establishes them

In front (the east) he lays one down with, " Queen thou art, the Eastern region", for a queen, indeed, the Eastern region is " The Divine Vasus are, indeed, the overlords of that region. . . . Agni (fire god), indeed, is here the repeller of shafts"

Then on the right (south) side (he lays down one brick) with, " Wide-ruling thou art, the southern region. . . . The Divine Rudras are indeed overlords of that region. . . . Indra is here repeller of shafts".

Then behind (west) " All ruling thou art, the western region " " The Divine Adityas are, indeed, the overlords of that region " " Varuna, indeed, is here repeller of shafts".

Then on the left (north) " Self-ruling thou art the northern region " " The Divine Maruts are, indeed, the overlords of that region " " Soma indeed, is here repeller of shafts".

Then in the middle he lays down one (brick) with, " the sovereign mistress thou art, the Great Region"! for the sovereign mistress that Great Region indeed is :—" All the gods are thine overlords. . . . Brihaspati is the repeller of shafts".

There were two ways of performing the encircling movement. One was by beginning a spiral movement at the holy object, the centre, the source of power, and proceeding outward in widening circles like the ripples of water from a centre of disturbance ; the other was by approaching the holy object in narrowing circles and then touching that centre from which the influence was being drawn. If that object was a well,

¹ Translations by Professor Eggeling. *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XLIII (Part IV), pp. 100 *et seq.*

² The central portion of the fifth lair is the blue canopy of heaven.

water was taken from it to drink, or to sprinkle the individual who was being treated for disease, or for the removal of a spell such as the blight of Evil Eye. The writer has in his possession a wooden ladle which was used on one occasion to "cure" himself. When a child in the Highlands I was being carried in the arms of an elderly female relative, and a man spoke to her and commented on my features and golden curls. As I fell ill shortly afterwards, it was suspected that this man had "put the Eye upon me". To remove the effects of Evil Eye, water was obtained from a certain well, and poured into the ladle in which had been placed a gold ring and a silver coin. A charm was repeated. I was made to sip the water three times, and then the water was sprinkled round me and round the fireplace. The cure was a successful one. A little cold water is sometimes beneficial to an infant's disordered stomach. In the writer's opinion, the old-world ceremony was appropriate for one who was to be concerned with the scientific study of folk-lore in his maturer years. In a sense, it was an initiation ceremony, for I was often reminded of it by the three female relatives who performed the rite, half believing in its efficacy—perhaps, believing in it more firmly than they cared to confess.

Top spinning, where it was a magical ceremony, as it still appears to be in the Torres Straits islands, had evidently a connexion with the ancient circulating ceremony of approaching the centre from without as does the top itself. In competitions, supposed by outsiders to be merely a form of amusement, the individual whose top went spinning longest was supposed to secure the largest share of good luck. This idea was prevalent in the writer's boyhood. Highland shepherds were wont, too, when their dogs performed the spiral movement before lying down to sleep, to betray much interest in this peculiar canine habit which some think originated when wild dogs made a bed for themselves in long grass. The spiral movements of birds of prey were also observed with interest. Coiled serpents received particular attention. They were sometimes depicted in pairs in spiral form on Scottish sculptured stones.

As has been indicated, the "sacred circuit" or spiral movement to the right was performed to attract good influences, emanations of *mana*, from the central "magic tank" of the Universe, but the movement to the left had a double significance

it might be performed either to undo evil, as if by unwinding its magical coil, or to attract evil influences and work harm by inverting the course of nature by means of imitative magic.

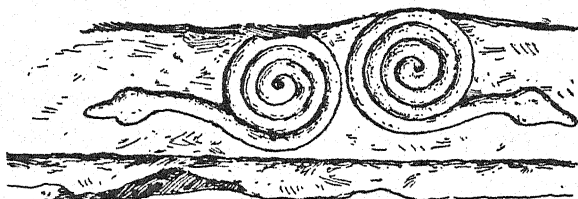


FIG. 39.
Serpent spirals on Scottish sculptured stone

The evil-undoing ceremony of turning to the left may first be illustrated by a few examples. In Cornwall it was performed at the Chapel Uny well. "On the first three Wednesdays in May", writes Mr. Robert Hunt in his *Romances of the West of England*, "children suffering from mesenteric diseases are dipped three times in this well, against the sun, and dragged three times around the well on the grass in the same direction". Mr. Lloyd refers in his *Peasant Life in Sweden* to a custom of similar significance. To cure whooping cough drops of water are taken "from a mill-wheel, which revolves *ansols*, that is, in a contrary direction to the course of the sun". Dalzell gives in his *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, instances of this widdershins ceremony of riddance, quoting from witch trials :

An animal, afterwards burnt alive by Thomas Grieve, perhaps for sacrifice, to cure a family, was put out at the window thrice, and taken in at the door thrice widdershins, or carried round by the north, against the course of the sun. . . . John Sinclair, after carrying his distempered sister backward to the Kirk of Hoy, laid her to the North.

Lane, in his *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*,¹ tells that when Egyptian Moslems, except the Wahhābees, visit the tombs of celebrated saints to perform "meritorious acts for the sake of these venerated persons", they "walk round the *maksoorah* or the monument from left to right", reciting passages from the Koran "inaudibly, or

¹ Chapter X.

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in a very low voice, before its door, or before each of its four sides". Lane refers also¹ to a ceremony performed to remove a "sty" from the eye :

A person goes out before sunrise, and, without speaking, walks round several tombs from right to left, which is the reverse of the regular course made in visiting tombs.

The left-hand encircling of the tomb appears to have been in the first instance, a ceremony of drawing forth from the tomb the spirit of the dead, or of effecting a temporary union with that spirit ; and, in the second instance, of drawing forth the influence of death to destroy the sty—to bring death to it.

It may be that light is thrown on the problem by the details and explanation given in connexion with the Hindu seasonal sacrifice to "the Manes"—that is, the Pitris (ancestors or fathers) who abide "in the third world from here". The sacrifice was performed so as to lead the fathers "up to a better world". It also recalled to life those who had been slain in battle when Vritra, the water-confining serpent-dragon was overcome. The god Indra was the Vedic slayer of Vritra, but the Brahmans invested the old myth with a wider significance or told it in their own way, as in the passage :

The spring, the summer and the rainy season—they are those who vanquished (Vritra) ; and the autumn and the dewy season—they are those whom they (the gods) recalled to life.

The sacrifice to the "fathers" was connected with the seasonal renewing of life.

In the *Satapatha Brahmana*² the priest circulates the altar first to the left and then to the right :

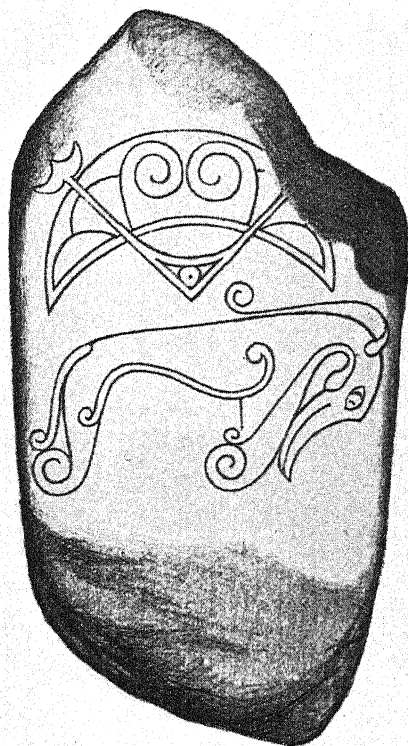
He moves thrice round from right to left, spreading the sacrificial grass all over (the altar) ; while spreading it all over from right to left in three layers, he reserves as much as may serve for the Prastava-bunch.

He then moves again thrice round (the altar) from left to right. The reason why he again moves thrice round from left to right, is that, while the first time he went away from here after those three ancestors of his, he now comes back again

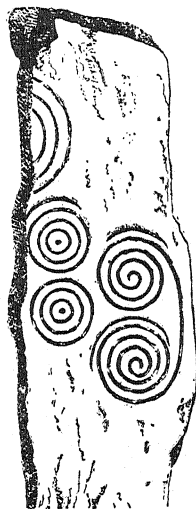
¹ Chapter XI.

² Translation by J. Aggeling, Part I, Books I and II, p. 425. Oxford, 1882. (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XII.)

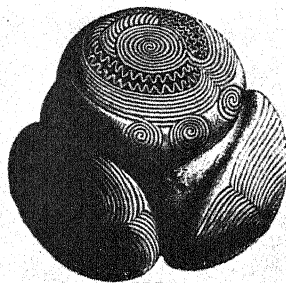
PLATE XI



I



II



III

- I "Swimming Elephant" and "Crescent" symbols, with spirals, on Forfarshire sculptured stone.
- II Spirals and rings on Orkney stone.
- III Spirals on stone "ball" with bosses. This type of stone "ball" is peculiar to Scotland, and it is usually regarded as of Iron Age.

(II and III from Catalogue of Museum of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.)

from them to this, his own world : that is why he again moves thrice round from left to right.

In another sacrificial ceremony—the Oblation to Rudra Tryambaka—the movement of the sacrificers and the priests is first to the left to ward off misfortune and to cut off what is not desired so that what is wished for may be procured. The *Satapatha Brahmana*¹ sets forth :

They then walked thrice round the altar not sunwise beating their left thighs (with the right hand) with the text, " We worship Tryambaka, the fragrant increaser of prosperity. Even as a gourd (is severed) from its stem, so may I be severed, from death, not from immortality ".

This is the prayer for blessing at this performance : thereby they invoke a blessing (upon the sacrifice), for verily blessed is he who shall be severed from Death, not from immortality. That is why he says, " May I be severed from death, not from immortality ".

Let the maidens then also walk round thinking,² " May we enjoy prosperity " ! That sister of Rudra, named Ambika, indeed, is the dispenser of happiness : hence the maidens also should walk round thinking, " May we enjoy prosperity ".

The text (prescribed) for them is, " We worship Tryambaka, the fragrant bestower of husbands. Even as a gourd (is severed) from its stem, so may I be severed from this (world), not from thence (yonder world) " ! By saying " from this ", she means to say " from my relatives " ; and by saying " not from thence ", she means to say " not from husbands ".

Then they (the sacrificer and priests) again walk round thrice sunwise, beating their right thighs. . . . As to why they again walk round thrice sunwise—they think, " Sunwise this sacred work of ours shall be accomplished ", and therefore they again walk thrice round sunwise.

If the movements to the left and to the right had the same significance in Egypt as in India, it is difficult to believe that the one country did not derive the doctrines involved from the other.

Further evidence regarding the ceremonial movement to the right—" with the sun " or " with the course of Nature " —comes from Borneo.

The Tuaran Dusuns of that island practise the sunways movement when collecting and expelling evil spirits. In this ceremony the spiral figures in a significant way.

¹ pp. 441-2.

² Or wishing.

Mr. Ivor H. N. Evans, who witnessed part of the ceremony in September, 1910, has made an interesting record of it.¹ He tells that the chief performers are women, and that the minor parts of drum- or gong-beaters are taken by men.

A procession of women in full ceremonial dress visits house after house in a village, and a performance is gone through in each. In front goes a boy who carries a spear on which is impaled a parcel of rice. Two men follow with a gong suspended from a bamboo pole which rests on their shoulders.

After them come the women, one of whom carries on her back a small sucking pig in a basket. Each woman holds a wand in her right hand, *which has a spiral of bark, running from end to end, removed from it*. These wands, I was told, are used for beating the sucking pig, and the name of *Mobog*, meaning "beating", is given to the ceremony because the pig is maltreated in this manner.

Mr. Evans says he understands that "the squeals of the pig . . . attract the spirits". The women shake bunches of bells and discs of brass as they perform posturing dances. In a house they spread out mats near young girls, and a man plants a sharpened stalk of coco-nut palm leaf in the ground at the end of the mats and near the door. The women take their places on the mats and the ceremony begins.

This consists partly of chant, partly of dance and chant combined. *At one time the women are moving slowly round in a circle from left to right, chanting the while, and emphasizing the time by means of the tetubit (discs of brass); at another they divide themselves into two files facing the spear, their head-priestess standing out in front and taking the leading part in a chant in which the others join. At this time they perform a posturing dance and make use of the bunches of small bells, one of which they hold in each hand.*

When the rites are finished the women pass to the next house. After all the houses have been visited, they make their way to the river, and the evil spirits are embarked on a raft "covered with models of men, women, animals and birds made of . . . sago-palm leaves, while offerings of cloth, cooking-pots, chopping knives, and food are also placed upon it". The raft is pushed off and floats away. "The sucking pig which has

¹ *Studies in Religion, Folk-Lore and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*. Cambridge, 1923, pp. 6 et seq.

been used as a lure is killed at the end of the ceremony, and its body thrown away."

The "left-hand" movement—the Scottish "widdershins" movement—was then in one of its aspects a ceremony of riddance and one which promoted or "made room for" good. It was therefore a luck ceremony. But in another aspect it was an evil ceremony—a sinister one in the double sense of the term.

In divination the widdershins movement was regarded as a sure indication of approaching disaster, misfortune and death. "St Andrew's well at Shadar in Lewis", writes Mr. J. M. Mackinlay,¹ "was much esteemed for its power of augury. A tub containing some of its water, was taken to the house of the patient, and a small wooden dish was placed on the surface of the water. If this dish turned sun-ways, it showed that the patient would recover; but if in an opposite direction, that he would die. . . . On one occasion two parishioners of Fodderty in Ross-shire consulted Tobar-na-domhnuic² in that parish on behalf of a sick friend. When they placed their pitcher on the surface of the water, the vessel moved round from south to west . . . and they hastened back to their friend with the good news. This was in the year 1832".

In the old Scots ballad "The Lowlands of Holland", the girl who sings:

I never loo'ed a lad but ane,
And he's drooned in the sea—

tells that "the bonnie ship" on which he sailed turned "widdershins about" before it foundered.

It was a mark of hostile intent for Irish warriors to drive their chariots round a fort keeping the left hand towards it.³

The encircling movement appears to have been anciently performed in connexion with stone circles. An Edinburgh archæologist who was examining one of these circles in Morayshire, asked a native ploughman if there was any lore regarding it, and received the reply:

If you walk round it three times to the left at midnight you will raise the devil.

¹ *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs*. Glasgow, 1893, p. 141.

² Sunday Well

³ *Ancient Man in Britain*, p. 172.

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Montgomery in his "Flyting" refers to the dancing witches who

Nine times withershins about the thorne raid.

In a Scottish witch trial it was stated that the accused had been seen "dancing and going widderschynness about within the said mylne (mill) of Eyemouth . . . it being ane common posture and custome of witches to doe". Another witch "turnit herself thrie severall tymes round *witherys* about the fyre (fire)", and that year her victim's crops were "blue and rotten". Dalyell tells that

A boy under twelve years of age was arrested on suspicion of sorcery, especially for having sometimes stopped a plough, and caused the horse break the yoke, by pronouncing some words, and turning himself widdershin, that is, turning himself round from the right hand to the left, contrary to the natural course of the sun.¹

Campbell of Tیره writes regarding unlucky actions :

It is a bad sign of a person's luck during the day that he should rise from bed on his left hand. It is a common saying when evil befalls a person. . . . "I did not rise on my right hand to-day." . . . When putting a straw rope on a house or corn-stack, if the assistant went *tuaitheal* (i.e. against the course of the sun), the old man was ready to come down and thrash him. On coming to a house the visitor should go round *deiseal* to secure luck in the object of his visit.²

It is not stated in *Joshua* (chap. vi) whether Jericho was encircled by the left or by the right. A horn was, however, blown :

And it shall come to pass that when they (the priests) make a long blast with the ram's horn and when ye shall hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him.

Buddha's pyre was suddenly enveloped in flames when five hundred of his disciples walked round it three times.³

"In Ireland", Dalyell notes, certain "religious ceremonies concluded with a dance to the right hand ; but when

¹ *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*. Edinburgh, 1834, pp. 455 *et seq.*

² *Superstitions*, pp. 230, 252.

³ *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XI, p. 129.

unpropitious, the priests blew a horn for a curse, and then the dance was to the left".

It was because dancing was frequently engaged in "for mystical purposes", that it was forbidden in Scotland in the eighteenth century, although permitted for recreation at an earlier period.¹

Circular ecstatic dances were performed in ancient times to procure an abundant store of magic, so that the dancers, if warriors, might fight well ; if witch-doctors, priests or priestess, prophecy, or worship the deity. In some ceremonies the images of the gods were carried round some sacred object, such as a tree, an altar or well, so that they might be stimulated just as they were believed to be stimulated when painted by the priests of ancient Egypt, Greece, etc.

Originally, it would appear, the encircling ceremonies of the agriculturists were, as indicated, performed by magic-workers to stimulate the Great Bear constellation. When in Ancient Egypt the solar faith was blended with the earlier stellar faith, as indicated in the Pyramid Texts, the sun appears to have been regarded as the "magic tank". The mystic solar circle and the many-ringed circle would thus appear to have had the same significance as the spiral. Protection against evil could be obtained simply by drawing a circle to the right, by constructing a circular tomb, or by erecting a circle of standing stones at which the necessary ceremonies were performed.

Campbell of Tیره tells a ghost story and proceeds :

An old man, having taken with him a Bible and made a circle round himself on the road with a dirk, encountered it (the ghost), and, in reply to his inquiries, the ghost confessed to having stolen a ploughshare, and told him where the secreted iron was to be found.²

A youth has a meeting with the devil. "He was advised to take a wand with him and at the place appointed trace a circle with it round himself, out of which he was not to move whatever temptation or terrors the stranger might bring to bear upon him." The devil, finding he could not tempt the youth to leave the circle,

became a grizzled greyhound, and came wildly dashing against the circle ; then a roaring bull ; then a flock of crows sweeping

¹ Dalryell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 573.

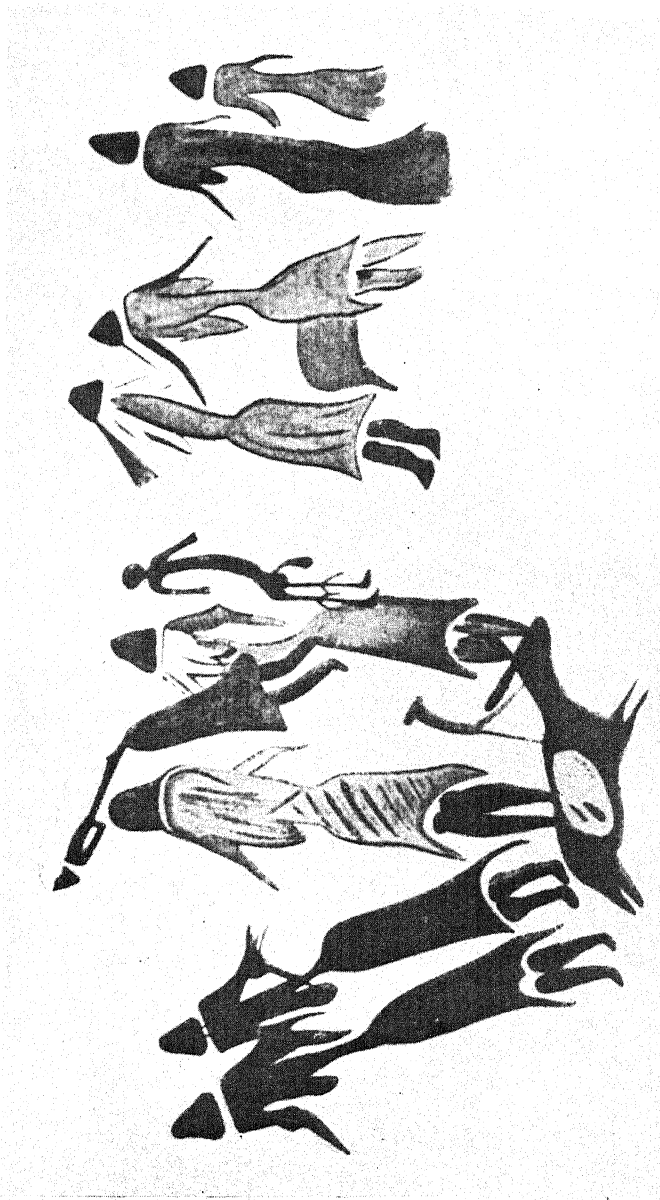
² *Superstitions*, p. 247.

above the youth, so near that the wind caused by their wings would have carried him out of the circle if he had not clung to the heather. When cock-crowing time came the devil abandoned his attempts and disappeared.¹

Even in Palæolithic times in Europe a ceremonial dance was performed. Nine women are seen in the Cogul cave picture, and they appear to be encircling a nude man, or an image. It may be that this was an ecstatic dance with a phallic significance. It is impossible, however, to say whether it had a solar significance, and was introduced from Africa. The women wear bell-mouthed and wasp-waisted gowns, as did the Minoan ladies of Crete of a later period. That the Cro-Magnon people had magico-religious beliefs connected with the sun is possible. It may be that the deer in the Magdalenian cave painting of Font-de-Gaume (Dordogne) illustrated a dawn or sunset myth (Plate 12). The curved symbol behind the crouching deer may be the rising or setting sun. One thing is certain, however, in this connexion. The solar faith of the early agriculturists was of more complex character than was possible among hunters. Cro-Magnon man had, perhaps, beliefs connected with sunrise and sunset, with day and night, and he may have regarded the dawn as the birth and sunset as the death or sleep of the sun.

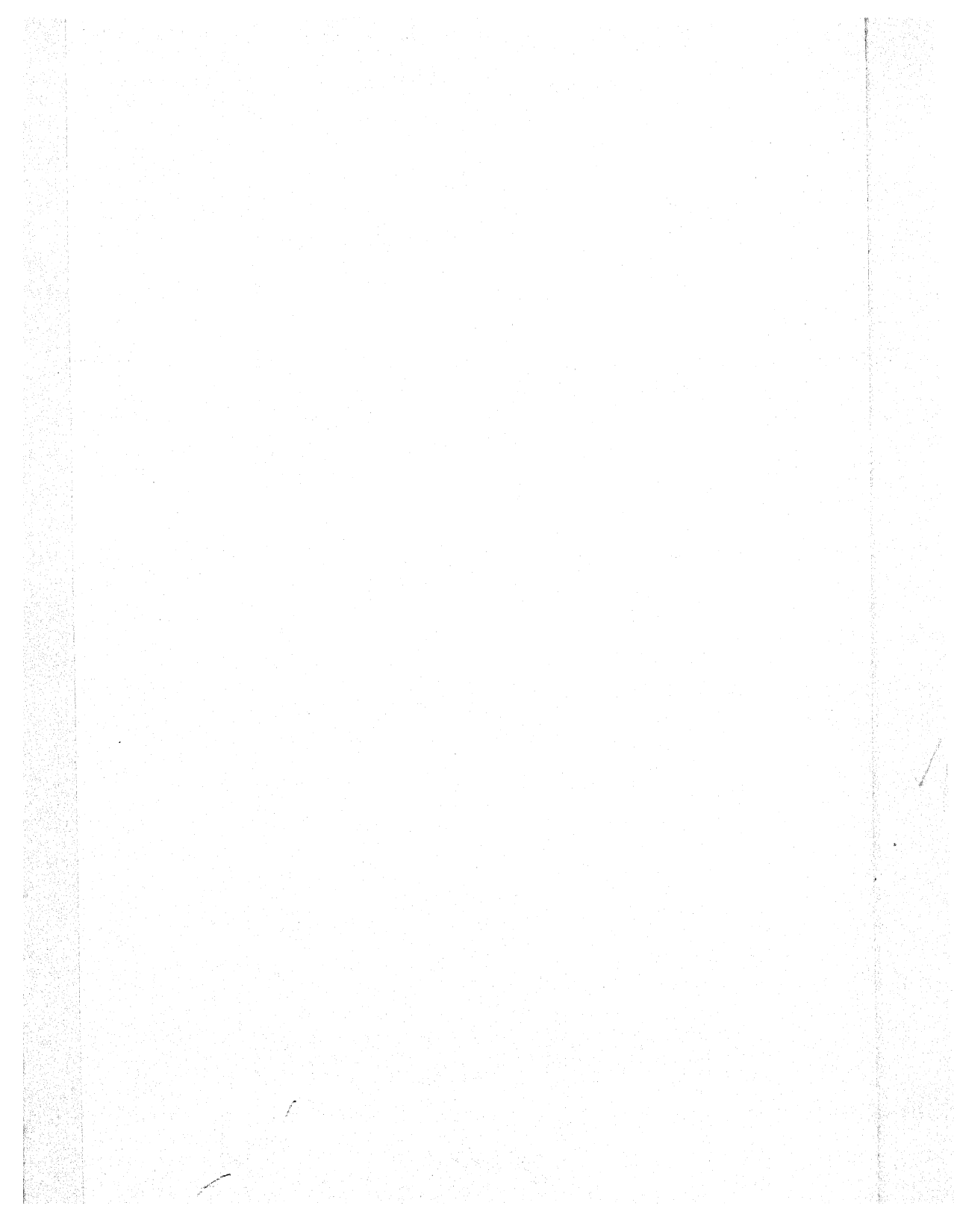
In the pre-Dynastic beliefs of Egypt which are to be traced in the Pyramid Texts, there may be survivals from the Hunting period. That there were Palæolithic beliefs connected with whorled shells no doubt can remain, and these beliefs, as will be shown in the next chapter, appear to be embedded in the shell complexes of later times.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 294.



PALÆOLITHIC WOMEN'S DANCE ROUND NUDE MALE IN COGUL CAVE PICTURE.

(After L'Abbé H. Breuil.)



CHAPTER III

EAR SYMBOLS

Culture mixing and symbol mixing—Survival of Palaeolithic concepts—Shell amulets in Egypt—Cro-Magnon shells—Indian Ocean shell in Mentone grave—Shells as caves—Shell murmur of god and air—Voice of sky god—Ear of Chaos—Breath of Life enters right ear—Breath of Death enters left ear—Chinese ear jades—Birth of Hindu hero from ear—Christ born from ear—Whirlwind and shell—Japanese magatama symbols and the ear—American “sliced shell” symbol—Ear connected with sun—Ear-rings and the eyes—Ear spirals in Polynesia—Polynesian idols—Polynesian sky child—Jacob taboos ear-rings—Ear-boring ceremonies—Ear-blood offered to gods—Magatama symbol and birth—Jewels become children—Japanese god “Great-Great-Ears”—Magatama in sun—120 Magatamas and Babylonian Zodiac—Divine years of Babylonia, India and Mexico—The three magatamas—The three seasons—American and Scottish magatamas.

When the concepts that had origin in one particular culture area, were carried to another, the culture-mixing which took place was productive of new developments. As the beliefs were mixed, so were the symbols which illustrated beliefs. Thus the Hindu *nāga* (serpent) rain-god, which was imported into China by the Central Asian Buddhists, exercised a marked influence, as De Visser has shown,¹ in the development of the Chinese dragon. This dragon is found to be connected with Chinese natural phenomena; it is depicted according to the conventions of Chinese art—in short, it is thoroughly Chinese in every respect, because it reflects Chinese religious beliefs and is prominent in Chinese religious customs. It is a typical Chinese complex. But when dissected, the characteristic Chinese dragon is found to have a history which takes us back to India among other places. The Polynesian peoples who emigrated to their Pacific Islands from Indonesia carried with them many beliefs, customs and symbols which had assumed an Indonesian complexion, and in the Islands these complexes assumed, in the process of time, a Polynesian complexion as a

¹ *The Dragon in China and Japan.*

result of development in isolation, and many local variations can be traced in the various island groups.

Something similar happened when a new cult in a single country absorbed the complexes of another cult or other cults as did the sun cult in ancient Egypt. As Professor Breasted has shown,¹ the solar cult absorbed an earlier stellar cult before the Pyramid Texts were inscribed, but traces of the process remained. The solar faith became the state theology² but the influence of "folk religion" remained and ultimately became predominant.³

In like manner the early agriculturists who invented new myths, and introduced new modes of thought in connexion with their new modes of life, and invented new symbols to give expression to new beliefs, absorbed the earlier Palæolithic beliefs which had been formulated by their hunting and fishing ancestors long before the soil was tilled and corn sown and reaped. When the pre-Dynastic Egyptians became agriculturists they did not forget all they had previously known, nor did they wholly abandon ancient modes of thought and life for they continued to hunt and fish as well as grow barley. They continued, too, to use Palæolithic amulets and symbols although they discovered and used new amulets and introduced new symbols. Like the Chinese who acquired new beliefs and customs from the Hindu Buddhists and added features of the rain-bringing *Nāga* to their own serpent-dragon, the agricultural Egyptians mixed their new beliefs and symbols with the old and imparted to the survivals a wider significance and deeper meaning.

It is known that the Egyptians continued for long to make use of shell amulets. They imported shells from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, wore them when living, placed them in graves, and when they began to mummify the dead they made new use of them, and they even occasionally mummified them.⁴

Shells were freely used as amulets by the Cro-Magnon peoples of Western Europe. These Palæolithic hunters and cave-dwellers wore necklaces of sea-shells and waist-belts of shells. Professor Osborne, dealing with the custom of placing shells

¹ *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 142.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁴ J. Wilfrid Jackson, *Shells as Evidence of the Migrations of Early Culture*, p. 205.

in graves, refers to a female skeleton which was found "enveloped in a bed of shells" and a male skeleton which had "a gorget and crown of perforated shells". In another case a head was "decorated with a circle of perforated shells coloured in red"; the body of the Combe-Capelle man "was decorated with a necklace of perforated shells".¹

Sometimes the shells used by Palæolithic man in Europe were carried long distances. In "Le Grotte des Enfants" at Mentone were found two fragments of an Indian Ocean shell (*cassis rufa*), while Mediterranean shells have been found associated with burials in the Dordogne valley.

We have no direct knowledge regarding Cro-Magnon beliefs, connected with shells, but judging from later evidence, it would appear that the shells were supposed to assist birth and afford magical protection against the various evils which threatened mankind. The ease with which the shell-fish emerged from its shell, was desired by the mother about to give birth to a child; the protection afforded by shells to their inhabitants was desired by those who found themselves often in peril. The connexion of the shell with the sun and moon was affected later when mankind, having adopted the agricultural mode of life, was forced to take a very special interest in the heavenly bodies as sources of life and energy. There is no evidence to show that in Palæolithic times, the shells were connected with sun and moon. It may be, however, that the shells as magico-religious objects were connected with the religious beliefs peculiar to the Palæolithic Age. It is possible that they were regarded as little caves in which the inhabitants took refuge as did the hunters themselves in mountain caves. As we have seen, these caves were evidently connected with the idea of birth; the winds were supposed to originate in caves and "earth holes". Perhaps this belief had origin when shells were indentified with caves. Mr. Wilfrid Jackson suggests that to the early people "the murmur of the shell was the voice of the god" and that was why ultimately "the trumpet made of a shell became an important instrument in initiation ceremonies and in temple worship".

In Nigeria certain shells are "sacred to the Spirit of the Sea", because, as the natives say, "one can always hear the

¹ *Men of the Old Stone Age*, pp. 304-5.

sound of her waves in them". Mr. Talbot writes in this connexion :

For the same reason all sea-shells are sacred in varying degree and some fresh-water ones, because these latter belong to the spirits of streams and rivers.

The sacred sea-shells are tabooed as food to the Juju priest "because these are sacred to the Ibibio Aphrodite".¹

It may be that the "murmur of the shell" was regarded by the Cro-Magnon peoples, who were not sea-farers, as that of the wind—"the air of life",—and as the birth-place or womb of wind and breath. The idea that winds are born in caves (earth shells) may thus have had origin long before mankind knew aught of the cardinal points, or conceived of a sky-world whirlwind from which all winds emanated. In post-Palæolithic times the "voice" of the god was the "voice of air"—the tempest and thunder. The "voice of air" was regarded as the "voice of the sky" by those who believed that "life was in the sky". The god of the sky spoke to human beings as the "air god", the "storm god", the "thunder god" or the "river god". As the Creator, the god of the sky spoke, and all things he named had origin. The Memphite theologians of ancient Egypt regarded Ptah, even in the Pyramid Age, as "the power of mind (heart) and tongue". He was the "voice of life" and therefore the "breath of life":

When the eyes see, the ears hear, and the nose breathes they transmit to the heart (mind). It is he (the heart) who brings forth every issue and it is the tongue which repeats the thought of the heart . . . Every Divine word came into existence by the thought of the heart and the commandment of the tongue. It was he (Ptah) who made the Kas and (created) the qualities, who made all food, all offerings, by his word. . . . It was he who gave life to the peaceful and death to the guilty.²

The Memphite theologian saw all things "first existing in the thought of the god. . . . The utterance of the thought in the form of a divine fiat brought forth the world. . . . Is there not here the primeval germ of the later Alexandrian doctrine of the Logos"?³

¹ P. Amaury Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*. London, 1923, pp. 10, 227.

² Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 44 et seq.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

But the "word" issuing from the heart as "breath" and spoken by the tongue, first entered the "ear" of chaos as it entered the "ears" of created man. The "breath of life" was heard as the "voice" before it was breathed by the individual. It came from the god's "sky house" as the windy murmur comes from the sea-shell.

The idea that the breath of life entered the ear like the air from the shell held against the human ear was not forgotten in Egypt. In the Ebers papyrus it is stated in one place that "the breath of life enters the right ear, and the breath of death enters the left ear". In the Berlin medical papyrus there is a prescription to "banish death from the ear".¹

In his scholarly work *Jade*, Dr. Laufer refers to a "curious ornament" in jade called *t'ien* or *ch'ung êrh* (i.e. filling the ears) which is mentioned in several passages of the *Shi King*. He explains that it is "simply an ear-ring, leaf-shaped in form" and in modern times made for the use of women.

In ancient times such ear-rings were worn by men, suspended from the cap by means of threads of white, green or yellow silk. Mao, the learned commentator of the *Shi King*, annotates that they were made of jade for the Son of Heaven, of stone for feudal princes, but of jade again for all the gentlemen of old age. The symbolic idea was, as it is put, *sai êrh*, "to obstruct the ears", i.e., they should be a reminder not to listen to bad discourses, and to shut off the voice of evil.²

As old men required jade ear-obstructors, and therefore those of more potency than the stone variety, it is possible that the custom was connected with the belief that death entered by the ear. Old men were less likely to be misguided by "the voice of evil" than young men.

In India the connexion between the ear and the shell, as a source of life, is found in the birth story of Karna, one of the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*. He emerges from one of the ears (*Karnau*) of the princess Pritha who set him adrift in a basket on the river Aswa which carried him to the Jumna: the Jumna carried him to the Ganges and he was rescued by a charioteer in the country of Anga. Karna's father was Surya, the sun god, and at birth the Hindu Siegfried had celestial ear-rings

¹ I am indebted to Mr. Warren R. Dawson for these references, which he has sent me without comment and not in connexion with any views expressed in this chapter.

² *Jade*, p. 253.

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in his ears and on his body an invulnerable coat of mail which grew as the child grew.

E. Sidney Hartland refers to the idea current in Europe during the Middle Ages regarding the conception of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes painters represent the Holy Ghost as entering his mother at her ear in the shape of a dove. In the church of the Magdalen at Aix, in Provence, is a picture of the Annunciation attributed to Albert Dürer, wherein waves of glory descend from God the Father, and in the midst of them a microscopic babe floats down upon the Virgin. . . .

In a picture of Fra Filippo Lippi, now in the National Gallery, London, a dove, which has been directed from the sky by a hand, "is making for the Virgin's navel".¹

Hartland also refers to the belief in impregnation by the wind.² The Hindu idea that the whirlpool "encloses the embryo" is of significance in this connexion. Apparently the whirlwind had been at an early period, identified with the wind producing whorled shell, a birth symbol and amulet, as has been indicated. That the shell was connected with the ear, is suggested by the *magatama*, or comma-shaped symbol of Japan and China, which in pre-Columbian America was known as the "sliced snail shell". As forming the two divisions of the sun, the comma-shaped symbols are in Japan called *Futatsu-Domoe* (figure 40). The Chinese know the white and black comma-shaped symbols enclosed in a circle,

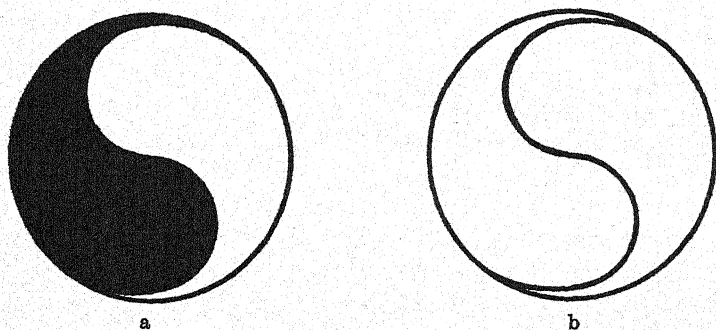


FIG. 40.

a, Chinese symbol of Yang and Yin; b, Japanese *futatsu-domoe* symbol.

¹ *The Legend of Perseus*. (London, 1894.) Vol. I, p. 131.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 179 *et seq.*

as the symbols of *Yang* and *Yin*, the male and female principles in Nature.

It is significant to find, when considering the resemblance between the magatama and the ear helix, to find that the ear was, like the whorled shell, connected with the sun.

Karna, the human son of the Hindu sun-god, Surya, was born, as stated, from his mother's ear, and at birth was equipped with magic ear-rings. These afforded him protection and gave him power. The belief is not yet extinct, especially among old sailormen and rural folk, that ear-rings strengthen the eyes. The sun and moon were the "eyes" of the sky-god. In Egypt the goddess Hathor, as Sekhet, was the "Eye" of Re, the sun god. One of Re's forms was the bull. A Scottish sculptured stone shows a bull with a spiral below the ear (fig 41). It is from Burghead in Morayshire.

The belief that the ear had a connexion with birth may have had origin, as suggested, simply because of the air-of-life murmurings of the shell which are heard only when it is pressed against the ear. Polynesian

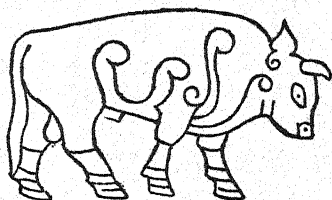


FIG. 41.

Bull on sculptured stone, Burghead, Scotland

evidence indicates that the human ear of itself suggested by its helix a connexion with the spiral. Ruth H. Greiner notes that in some of the Tiki faces carved on clubs, the ears are invariably represented by double curvilinear spirals.¹ Tikis were carved also on stone, bone and ivory. Miss Greiner says :

In most of the carvings the head of the Tiki is disproportionately large and has as its most prominent feature round or pointed oval spectacle eyes with a high ridge through the centre terminating in the ears and the nose. Superorbital ridges are generally indicated and these likewise terminate in the ears which on the small figures are usually represented by two connected spirals turned towards each other. On a few specimens only single spirals are seen and on larger figures a projecting longitudinal flange replaces the spiral. . . . The mouth is very large and is always open, showing the tongue. . . . Some tikis have five fingers on each hand; others have only three or four.¹

¹ *Ibid*, 5.

The Tiki (figure 42) is best known as a carved jade or jadeite neck ornament of the Maori, which was greatly valued, being a family heirloom which was invariably worn by the head of a family. Some writers have suggested that the grotesque



FIG. 42A.
Polynesian Tiki

little figure represents the child in the womb, or some primitive ancestor. It may, however, be a memory of the life-giving frog-god. With its round eyes, and especially when depicted with three fingers on each hand, it bears a strong resemblance to the frogs in the Maya codices. As in ancient Egypt, the frog was a symbol of resurrection in more than one area. Among the Maori "human beings are", writes James Cowan,¹ "spoken of as *Nga-aitanga-a-Tiki*, the begotten of Tiki. The Maori greenstone neck-pendant, carved in grotesque resemblance to a human form, and called Tiki, is probably a repre-

sentation of Tiki, the father of mankind. It is an interesting coincidence if nothing more, that the image of the goddess Thinei was worn suspended from the neck by the chief judge in ancient Egypt. The Maori strongly believed in his divine descent. His genealogies all go back to the gods". Mr. Cowan quotes in this connexion the following *oriori*, or "chief's lullaby to his little son":

From heaven's pinnacle thou comest,
O my son,
Born of the very sky,
Of Heaven- that- stands- Above.

¹ *The Maori of New Zealand*, Christchurch, New Zealand and London, 1910, pp. 106-7.

sentation of Tiki, the father of mankind. It is an interesting coincidence if nothing more, that the image of the goddess Thinei was worn suspended from the neck by the chief judge in ancient Egypt. The Maori strongly believed in his divine descent. His genealogies all go back to the gods". Mr. Cowan quotes in this connexion the following *oriori*, or "chief's lullaby to his little son":



FIG. 42B.
Toad from Copan (after Maudslay)

Yes, from the Sky-God thou art,
 From the vast and lofty Rangi ;
 From Tane, too, and Paia,
 Who raised on high the firmament
 At the separation of Heaven and Earth.
 From the very elements, the Winds,
 The whistling, swirling Winds of Heaven,
 The bright flashing Lightning,
 And the rumbling, loudly crashing Thunder.

Ear ornaments were connected with the sky and especially with the sun in Syria and Palestine. When Jacob fled from his father-in-law his wives carried away certain gods which were so small that Rachel "put them in the camel's furniture and sat upon them" so that Laban "found them not".¹ But later the wives "gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and *all their ear-rings which were in their ears* ; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem".² Solar symbols and ear plugs were worn by pre-Columbian Americans and their gods, by Melanesians and Polynesians in Oceania and by various peoples in Asia and Africa. Ear-boring and ear distension was a widespread custom. In some cases, as among the Tamils of Southern India, ears were bored and plugged when a child was quite young. A. F. R. Wollaston in his *Pygmies and Papuans*³ quotes an account of a boar sacrifice at which there was what seemed at first an alarming incident :

A three-year-old child painted red and crying loudly, had been roughly seized and dragged towards the dais, and for a moment we thought something more serious than a boar sacrifice was about to take place. But we were much relieved to see that it was only having its ears pierced.

Sir James G. Frazer, quoting his authorities, tells that according to the beliefs of certain Pacific islanders,

The souls of grown-up people who did not have their ears and noses pierced in their life-time on earth are not admitted straightway to the heavenly mansion ; they must stop outside under the eaves for a time.⁴

During the festival of the pre-Columbian Mexican festival in

¹ Genesis XXXI.

² Genesis XXXV.

³ London, 1912, p. 135.

⁴ *The Belief in Immortality*, Vol. III, p. 166. London, 1924.

honour of the Maize Goddess, young and old "did penance by drawing blood from their ears. The blood so drawn was kept in vessels which were not scoured, so that a dry crust formed over it". A girl was sacrificed, but before the fatal blow was struck the elders and nobles cast down before her as an offering the blood they had drawn from their ears during the fast. The women did likewise. This victim was honoured as the human representative of the goddess and she wore golden ear-rings.¹

Among the mountain tribes of South-eastern Africa the ear was supposed to be the seat of intelligence.² Numerous instances could be given of the widespread customs and beliefs connected with the ear as something more than a mere organ of hearing. Its connexion with birth, with the shell and the magatama or comma-shaped symbol becomes more significant as these customs and beliefs are accumulated and examined.

In Japan the magatama bead had an intimate connexion with birth. The Shinto sacred work, the *Ko-ji-ki* tells that when the creator Izanagi washed the filth of Hades from his left eye, the sun goddess Ama-terâsu came into existence. He bestowed upon her the right to rule the "Plain of High Heaven" by jingling his beads. The goddess herself had a necklace of five hundred "curved jewels" (magatama beads) each of which was eight feet long. When she armed herself with sword and bow and arrows, she twisted her jewels in the left bunch of her hair, apparently to protect herself, like the Irish hero Cuchullin who wore pearls in his hair. These magatama beads were closely connected with birth. When Susa-no-wo, her brother, invaded the "Plain of High Heaven" and created alarm, Amaterâsu, having armed herself, stood facing him on one of the banks of the "Tranquil River of Heaven" (the Milky Way) which is also referred to as the "Heavenly River of Eight Currents", or "Reaches",³ while he stood on the opposite bank. He assured her that he had no evil intention and proposed they should pledge their faith and produce children. The goddess consented and "they swore to each other from the opposite banks of the Tranquil River of Heaven". Amaterâsu asked the brother for his

¹ Frazer, *The Golden Bough (The Scapegoat)*, pp. 291 et seq., 1913 edition.

² Frazer, *The Golden Bough (Spirits of the Corn and Wild)*, Vol. II, p. 148.

³ The four cardinal points and four subsidiary points of the compass.

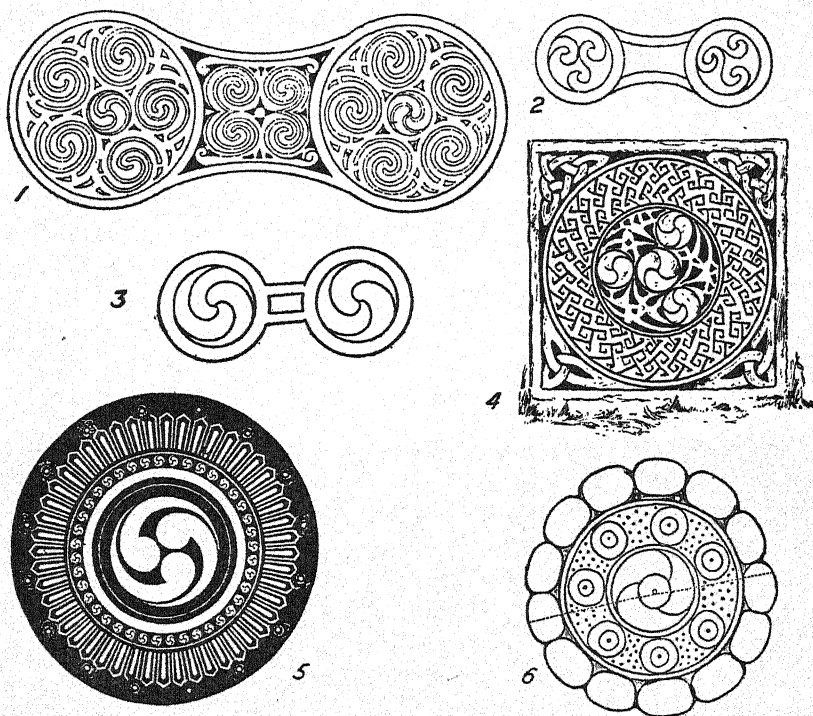
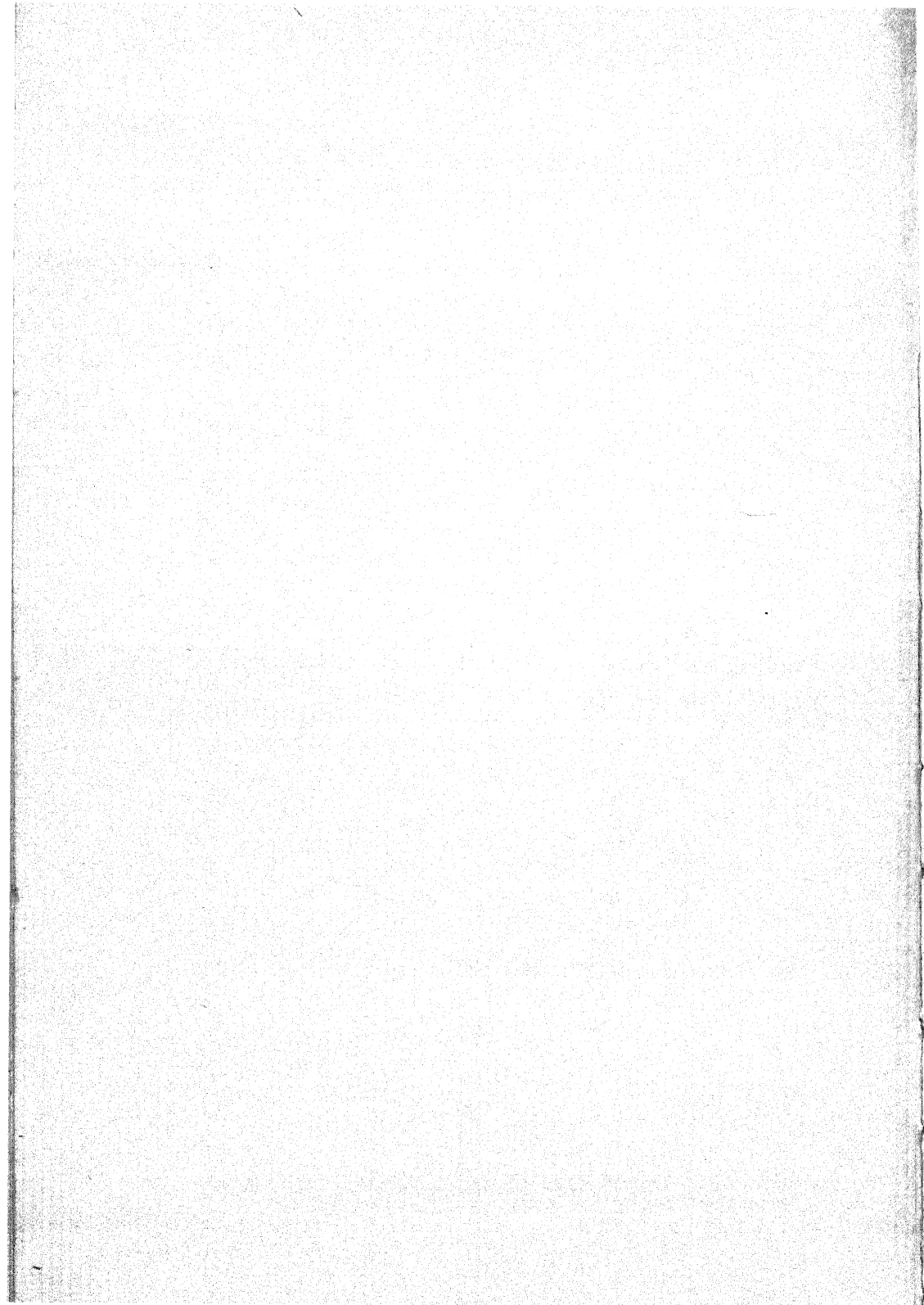


PLATE XIII
SOLAR MAGATAMAS

Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 from Scottish sculptured stones; No. 5 from Japan;
No. 6 from North America—a shell disc from Tennessee (after T. Wilson).



sword. She received it and broke it into three pieces. Then she jingled her magatama jewels, brandished them, washed them in the "True-Pool-Well of Heaven" and "crunchingly crunched them". From the mist of her breath three princesses were born. Then Susa-no-wo asked for the jewels. He jingled them, washed them, crunched them and "blew them away" and five gods were born. The first bore the lengthy but significant name, "*Truly-Conqueror-I-Conquer-Conquering Swift-Heavenly-Great-Great-Ears*". The second was the "*Hohi of Heaven*", but what "*Hohi*" means is unknown, the third was "*Prince Lord of Heaven*", the fourth "*Prince Lord of Life*" and the fifth "*the God of Kumano*". The three goddesses were those of mists, islands and torrents. Whether the eight deities were the stars of the Great Bear and the Pole Star, or the eight cardinal and subsidiary points of the compass is uncertain. They were all absorbed by the solar cult. The Mikado of Japan is supposed to be descended from the "*Great-Great Ears*" god and from the sun-goddess and the god of "*Birth and Growth*".¹

The myth need not here be followed farther. It is sufficient to note that the magatama, or comma-shaped beads, are "life givers", that the goddess Amaterâsu twisted them above her left ear, and that the first god born from the crunched beads was the conquering "*Great-Great-Ears*".

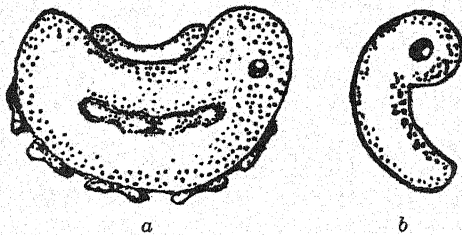


FIG. 43.
Japanese magatamas

The comma-shaped, or claw-shaped magatama had evidently a close association with the ear and with the life-giving shell. Figure 43b is a conventional magatama bead; figure 43a is

¹ Translation of *Ko-ji-ki*, by Chamberlain in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. X (supplement) and Aston *Shinto. The Way of the Gods*, pp. 96 et seq.

the magatama as a birth or multiplying symbol from which eight smaller magatamas emerge. This is the "Komochi magatama", "Komochi" means "with child". The magatama beads were placed in graves, offered to ancestral spirits and worn by the living. They were not merely "fertility" symbols, in the narrow sense of the term, but symbols representing highly complex beliefs connected with the idea of cosmic energy.

On Plate XIII are solar symbols enclosing whirling magatamas from areas as far apart as pre-Columbian America, Japan and Scotland. The spirals in the space between the two discs in figure 1, Plate XIII may be compared with the Maori tattoo designs (figure 38). It will be seen that the magatamas in the American (figure 6), Scottish (figure 4) and Japanese (figure 5) sun discs closely resemble one another. As generators of heat, light and energy, they appear to link with the earlier spiral. In the Japanese disc (figure 5) forty small discs, each enclosing three magatamas, are placed in an outer ring. There are thus in all 120 small magatamas. This number is significant. It is evident that these 120 magatamas stand for the 120 degrees of the Babylonian zodiac. The 40 small discs suggest the 4 cardinal points multiplied, in Babylonian fashion, by 10—the 10 fingers. The Babylonian basal number 60 was arrived at by multiplying the 6 parts of human body (arms, legs, head and trunk) by the 10 fingers. The 60 plus 2 (2 hands), gave origin to 120 as the measurement of the zodiac. Time and space were equated and the mythical ages were calculated according to the same system. Thus 120 sars, or divine years, were equal to 432,000 years. The Hindus had four Mythical Ages (Yugas), and multiplied the 120 Babylonian sars by 10, which gave them 12,000 divine years for their *Mahà-yuga* (Great yuga), which equalled 4,320,000 human years. The first Hindu Age was composed of 4,800 years (1,200 multiplied by 4), and the first of the four pre-Columbian Mexican Ages was also one of 4,800 years.

On the outer rim of the Japanese solar symbol (Plate XIII, fig. 5) are sixteen (4 by 4) discs. But the three magatama symbols in the centre of the sun disc form, instead of a swastika, a revolving triskelion, or triquetra, which the Japanese refer to as the "mitsu-domoe" ("mitsu" means "three").

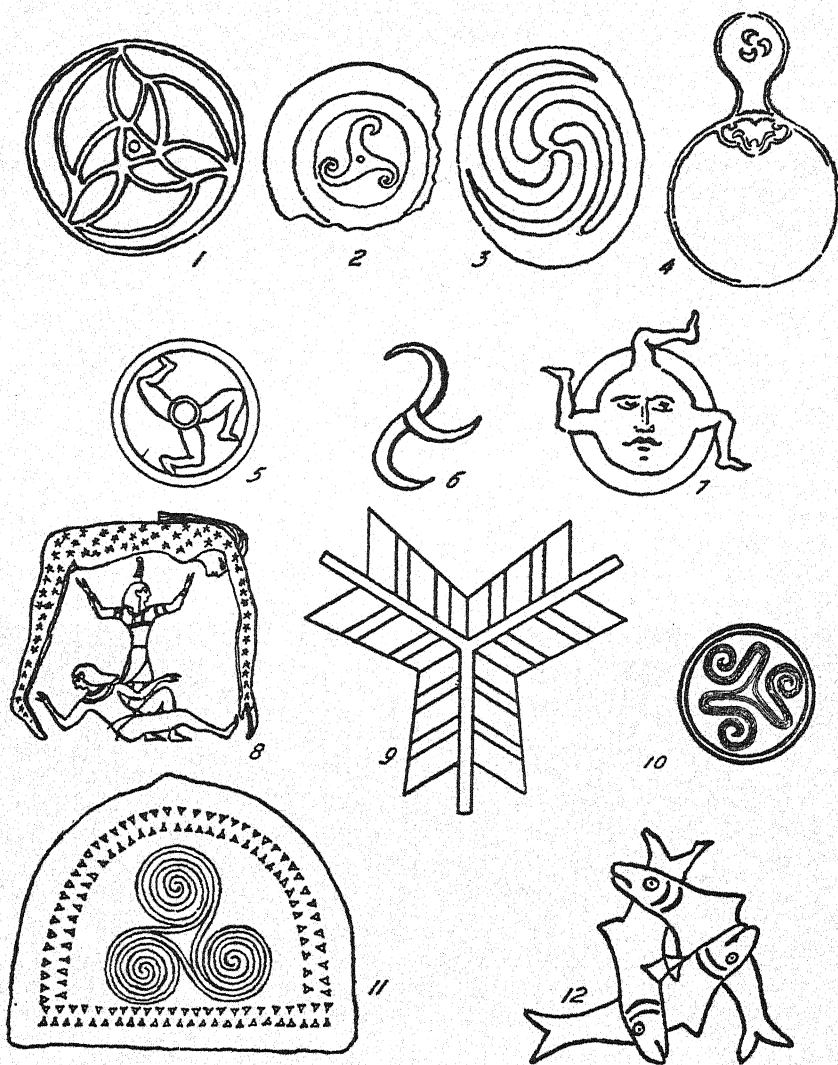
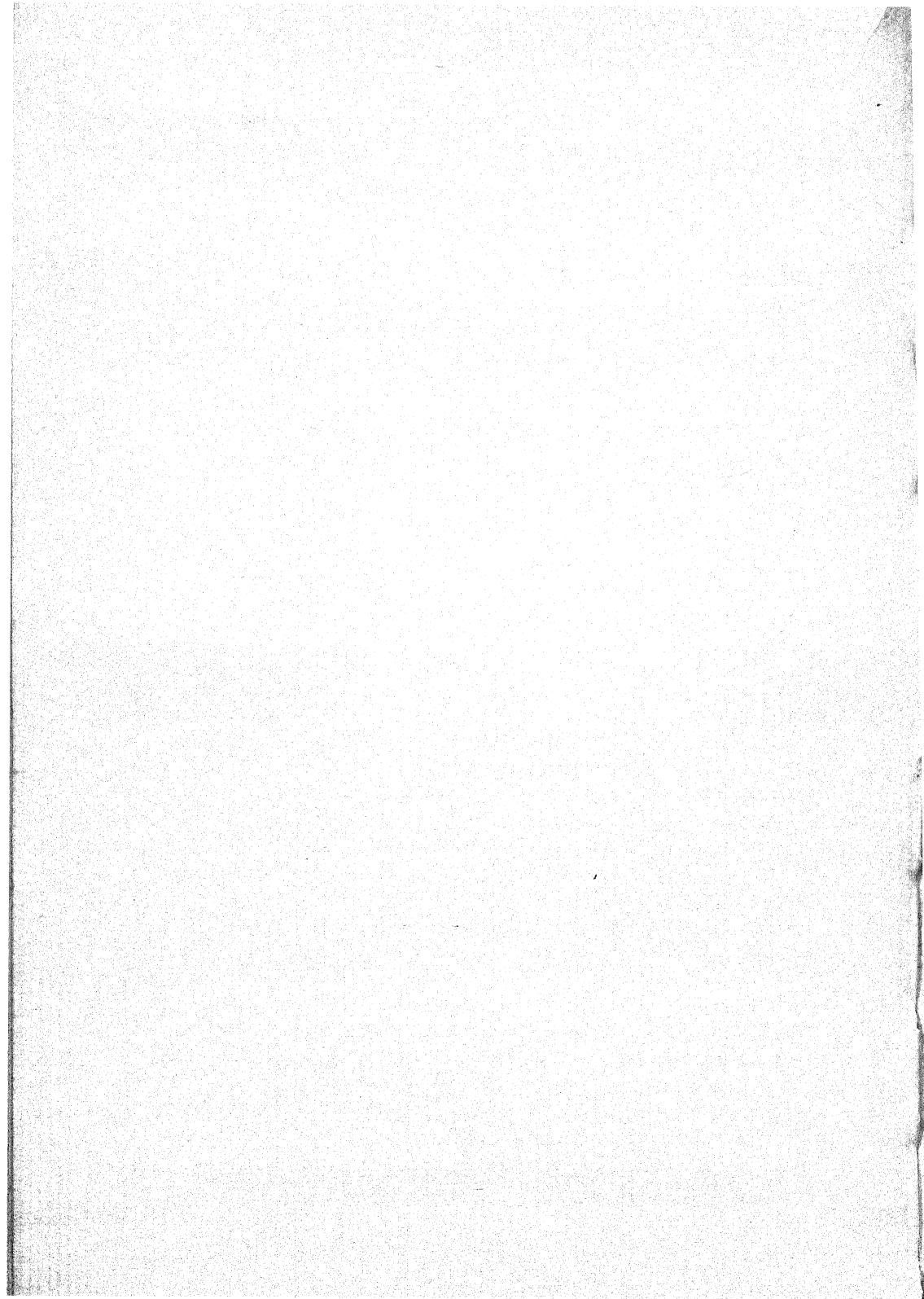


PLATE XIV
TRISKELION SYMBOLS

1, From Scottish Lake of Dowalton ; 2, Irish bronze object ; 3, on wood from Lochlee crannog, Scotland ; 4, Bronze mirror, with symbols on handle, from Balmacellan, Scotland (Munro) ; 5, from Lycian coin (Fellows) ; 6, from coin from Megara (P. Gardiner) ; 7, from Celtiberian coin (Lud. Müller) ; 8, Egyptian sky-goddess Nut, supported by Shu, and Geb on ground ; 9, from Japanese crest of solar arrows ; 10, Scandinavian triskelion ; 11, triskelion in spiral form from Caucasus (Chantre) ; 12, from Tintern Abbey, Scotland.



The triskelion is an ancient and widespread symbol. Like certain other symbols and certain culture complexes which reached Japan, it had origin somewhere in the Near East. It may have originally symbolized the three seasons of the early agriculturists of Egypt—the hot season, the cool season, and the season of inundation, represented by the lion-headed goddess, the cow goddess and the hippopotamus goddess as in Tutankhamen's tomb. The three-limbed symbol may also have represented the earth, air and sky—the deities Geb, Shu and Nut. The lotus, which appeared on the surface of the deep at Creation and gave birth to the sun, is represented usually in triple form. It may be that the ancient concept survived in religion alone after the four seasons were identified by a Mediterranean people who had adopted the agricultural mode of life after receiving the seeds of the naturally-cultivated Egyptian barley. On the other hand, it may have originally symbolized not only the three seasons but also the three gods of the sun—the young god of dawn, the god at high noon, and the old god of sunset. In Babylonia the seasons and sun-phases were connected.

There is no evidence to show that the triskelion had, like the swastika and spiral, an ancient stellar significance. It has come down to us as a distinctive solar symbol. But the magatama triskelion takes us back to early beliefs connected with birth-assisting and birth-promoting shells.

On Plate XIV several symbols are given. Figure 11 from the Caucasus is of special interest because it links the triskelion with the spiral, as does also Figure 10 from Scandinavia. As is shown by figures 1 to 4, the triskelion reached Ireland and Scotland at an early period, for these relics have been assigned to the archæological Bronze Age. The three-legged symbol of the Isle of Man was imported in historic times, but the reason that it was favoured may have been that the triskelion had long possessed a symbolic significance to the Celtic peoples. Figure 7 from a Celtiberian coin, is definitely a sun symbol, and may throw light on the significance of Figures 1 and 2. The Tintern Abbey survival (Figure 12) shows clearly that the symbol was always a revolving one. Figure 8 shows the Egyptian triad, Nut, Shu and Geb, referred to above.

CHAPTER IV

TREE SYMBOLS

Poetry of Trees—Nigerian "Tree Worship"—Ancient Egyptian "Tree of Life"—Associations of with sky and water—Mythic origin of plants—Sycamore-fig and Mother goddess—Tree "milk"—Honey and milk—Pharaoh a baby after death—Celestial milk—Milk ceremonies—"Milky Way" and growth of plants—Celestial rivers of milk, honey, wine and oil—Cult of Artemis—The Aztec Artemis—Mexican and Hindu Milk-yielding Tree of Paradise—Cow-mother of trees and parrots—Hebridean Tree-and-milk goddess—Edinburgh hazel grove—Fire and milk from tree—Milk and tree cult of Rome—Incense trees and curative herbs—The sacred vine—Vine goddess and water goddess—Sumero-Babylonian vine of the sky—Tammuz and the vine—Climbing plants and spiral—Twisting trees—Sacred ivy—Trees and metals—Trees and standing stones—Backbone, tree and other symbols—Worship of trees, stones, mountains and rivers.

TREE symbols bring us into touch with what is usually called "Tree worship". But this term is somewhat misleading. Early man did not begin to worship trees simply because they seemed wonderful and mysterious. He did not feel and hear the poetry of nature like the poet Shelley who, musing amidst the ruins of Pompeii :

Heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets ; and heard
The mountain's slumberous voice at intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls.

Before early man paid attention to the "voices" of trees, he had formulated definite beliefs regarding some of them. A tree was supposed to have an indwelling spirit. In southern Nigeria, for instance, it is told that "Great trees can always give signs to those that believe in them, and many have the power of speaking through the mouths of their priests". Mr. P. Amaury Talbot informs us¹ regarding a sacred tree at the town of Uduko, "Its name is Eyeyek, and within it dwells a 'live power' which can speak to its worshippers through the priest of Idiong, and acts as a guardian to those who take

¹ *Life in Southern Nigeria*, London, 1923, p. 114.

refuge in its shadow". In the Idiong secret society the cult of the vulture is prominent, while the eagle and serpent figure in others. "Tree worship" is connected with the worship of animals and stones and ancestors. Mr. Talbot refers to a "Whispering Palm" beneath which dwells a priest in a little hut.

When any dispute has arisen as to the dead man's will—or should it be desirable to discover some secret the knowledge of which was not revealed before death—inquirers take an offering and go to consult the priest of the "Whispering Palm". Only by him may questions be put, and the moment he has spoken all must preserve dead silence and remain without motion. Suddenly a "going" is heard in the top of the palm trees, after which the branches are said to sway and bend; as if some heavy body had alighted among them.

Then, clear to all ears, comes the answer, and the questioners cowering beneath assert that it is always given in the very voice of the dead man.¹

Here we evidently meet with the survival of a custom based on ancient complexes, and not merely with primitive savage beliefs. The priest consults the spirit of the dead through the tree, and, as has been indicated, the tree is connected with a large body of beliefs which had a history somewhere. Mr. Talbot refers to links with Egypt and Greece².

Early man when he first took an interest in trees and other natural objects, was not a dreamy Shelley. The beauty and mystery of the world did not necessarily make poetic appeal to him. His attitude towards Nature was really more prosaic, more practical than that of Shelley—more like that of Dr. Johnson, who wrote in his "Autumn poem":

'Twas Spring, 'twas Summer, all was gay;
Now Autumn bends a cloudy brow;
The flowers of Spring are swept away,
And Summer fruits desert the bow.

The fields that waved with golden grain,
As russet heaths are wild and bare;
Not moist with dew, but drenched with rain,
Nor Health, nor Pleasure wanders there.

His chief interest in Nature was what she gave him, and he was especially concerned about her gifts of "Health" and

¹ *Life in Southern Nigeria*, London, 1923, p. 117.

² *Ibid*, pp. 10 *et seq.*

"Pleasure". Health promoted longevity; the gods were painted so as to be "made healthy"—so that they might continue to perform their functions with vigour and enthusiasm.

From the earliest period of which we have knowledge—that is, when texts render articulate the beliefs and concepts of early man—"tree worship" is found to be of highly complex character. When the dead Pharaoh went to the sky world, he was led by the Morning Star, a green falcon, identified with "Horus of Dewat" to "the tree of life in the mysterious isle in the midst of the Field of Offerings". Over this isle "the gods make the swallows fly. The swallows are the Imperishable Stars. They give to this King Pepi this tree of life, whereof they live, that ye (Pepi and the Morning Star) may at the same time live thereof".¹

Here the tree is associated with a sacred island on the sacred lake, which is in the sky, and the sacred birds that flutter over the tree are stars and gods. The belief that life was in the sky had already been well advanced, the solar cult had absorbed the stellar cult and also the "tree cult", the "bird cult" and the "well" or "lake cult". But these "cults" had never really existed separately: they were parts of a whole even before the tree and well and swallows were transferred to the sky world.

The trees and plants were supposed by the ancient Egyptians to have originated from the body moisture of deities. Even divine tears had vitalizing power. Good plants came from good deities and harmful plants from the evil deities. Maspero² has written in this connexion:

Sît (Set) and his partisans were the cause and origin of all that is harmful. Daily their eyes shed upon the world those juices by which plants are made poisonous, as well as malign influences, crime and madness. Their saliva, the foam which fell from their mouths during the attack of rage, their sweat, their blood itself, were all no less to be feared. When any drop of it touched the earth, straightway, it germinated, and produced something strange and baneful—a serpent, a scorpion, a plant of deadly nightshade or of henbane. But, on the other hand, the sun was all goodness, and persons or things which it cast forth into life infallibly partook of its benignity.

¹ Pyramid Texts 1209-16. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 134.

² *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 157.

But Rē's saliva gave origin to the serpent which stung him. In the Sait Magical Papyrus (B.M. No. 10,051) it is said, Mr. Warren R. Dawson informs me :

When Rē weeps again the water which falls from his eye upon the ground turns into working bees. They work in flowers and trees of every kind, and wax and honey come into being from water.

The same magical papyrus refers to other origins :

When Horus weeps the water which falls from his eye upon the ground grows into plants. Thus comes into existence frankincense.

When Geb is ill the blood which flows from his nose upon the ground grows there. Thus came into existence the cedar and from its water (sap) the cedar oil.

When Shu and Tefnut weep copiously the water, which falls from their eyes upon the ground, grows. Thus came into existence the plants which produce incense.

The " tree of life " from which the dead received nourishment in Paradise was the sycamore fig. Maspero writes regarding this tree in the Memphite nome and the Letopolite nome, which were inhabited by " detached doubles " of the goddesses Nut and Hathor :

These combined districts were known as the " Land of the Sycamore ", a name afterwards extended to the City of Memphis ; and their sacred trees are worshipped at the present day both by Mussulman and Christian fellahin. The most famous among them all, the Sycamore of the South, was regarded as the living body of Hathor on earth.¹

The sycamore fig is peculiar in this respect : " the fruit all adheres to the stock of the tree, and not, as in the common fig tree, to the extremities of the branches ", as the Rev. Dr. John Inglis emphasises in his *Bible Illustrations* (p. 83). Like other fig trees, including *Ficus elastica* (the India-rubber tree), *Ficus Benghalensis* (the Banyan, the sacred Hindu tree), *Artocarpus incisa* (the Bread-fruit tree), etc., as well as the mulberry, hemp and hop, and various plants including dandelion the poppy, harebell, etc., it exudes a milky fluid called " latex ".

The latex presents different appearances in different plants. It is rarely quite watery (banana) ; usually it is more or less milky (*euphorbia*) ; occasionally thick and coloured (in

¹ *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 122.

Chelidonium majus, the "Greater Celandine", a plant allied to the poppy, it has an orange colour). It consists of water containing various substances, either in solution or in suspension. These substances are usually of the nature of excreted products, so that the tubes are often to be regarded simply as reservoirs of excreted matter. Of such substances opium, guttapercha, caoutchouc, tannins, resins and gums are examples. Frequently, however, the tubes contain nutritive substances as well To some extent, therefore laticiferous tissue may discharge a vascular function, serving for the storage and transport of nutritive substances.¹

The "latex" of the sycamore fig is quite milky in appearance. This appears to have been the reason why it was in early times imported into Egypt, probably from southern Arabia, and given a religious status by being connected with the goddesses Nut and Hathor. Both deities were connected with the Celestial cow whose star-spangled belly formed the sky. Before, however, the cow was elevated to the heavens, it was sacred in the Nile valley. It was the "mother cow" which gave milk and was therefore a source of the food supply. A tree which similarly yielded milk was, to the early people, a form of the "mother goddess". Hathor was therefore shown both as a cow and as a sycamore fig—the "tree of life". The tree in question was worshipped, not because its leaves whispered, or its branches waved like arms in the breeze, or because its fallen leaves stirred by air suggested the "light footfalls of spirits", but because it yielded milk and fruit and especially life-giving milk, the elixir of life. The milk of the tree was the milk of the goddess.

Pharaoh was supposed to be suckled in childhood by the goddess, and he was depicted with a cow's teat in his mouth. The god Zeus in like manner was suckled by a goat, or a horned sheep as a Mycenæan carving shows, in the cave of mount Ida in Crete. Various cult animals were the wet nurses of gods and heroes. Romulus and Remus were, on the banks of the Tiber, suckled by a she-wolf beneath a milk-yielding fig-tree. A Chinese royal foundling was suckled by a tigress.² The "bear-mother" was known even in America.

In Greece the newly-born babe was given "fig milk"; in the Highlands of Scotland the "milk" of the hazel nut was

¹ J. M. Lowson, *A Text Book of Botany*. London (5th edition), 1912, pp. 53 *et seq.*

² Laufer, *Jade*, p. 182.

favoured, and elsewhere butter, honey, water sweetened with sugar, etc., are supposed to be necessary for baby's first repast. "Honey and milk of the nut" is the most famous Highland elixir. ✓

Honey brings in the bee which visits flowers and tree blossoms and sometimes favours tree hollows as hives. In ancient times the wasp was not distinguished from the bee (in Gaelic a wasp is a "dog bee"), and the female fig tree is fertilized by a wasp. As we have seen, bees were supposed to have had origin from the tears of the God Rē. The inhabitants of Lower Egypt were the "Bees". The honey-and-milk elixir connects ✓ the bee, as well as the cow, with "tree-worship"—the worship of the sycamore fig, which grew in the sky-world on a sacred island, beside a sacred pool, of a sacred lake. "Well worship", therefore, comes in also. And so does serpent worship. The serpent was connected with the river, as we have seen. "Tree worship" should not be considered by itself, but, as indicated, as part of a whole.

As the Pharaoh in infancy required, like other babies, milk for his sustenance, so, it was believed, did he require milk in the Otherworld. An ancient concept is that when the Pharaoh died he became a little child again. As he was born into this life, so was he born into the next life.

One of the Pharaoh Pepis of the Sixth Egyptian Dynasty figures as a baby of the Otherworld in the Pyramid Texts (910-913), and the goddess is his mother :

This King Pepi knows his mother, he forgets not his mother ;
(even) the White Crown shining and broad that dwells in
Nekheb, mistress of the southern palace . . . and the
bright Red Crown, mistress of the regions of Buto. O mother
of this King Pepi . . . give thy breast to this King Pepi,
suckle this King Pepi therewith.

The goddess makes answer :

O my son Pepi, my King, my breast is extended to thee,
that thou mayest suck it, my King, and live, my King, *as long
as thou art little.*

The goddess of the two crowns represents Upper and Lower Egypt. But the goddesses of the Two Lands also suckle the King in vulture form :

the two vultures with long hair and hanging breasts ; . . . they draw their breasts over the mouth of King Pepi, but they do not wean him forever.¹

When Osiris himself was called to the sky, milk was provided for him—the milk of the mother cow (Pyr. Ut. 337) :

The sky thunders, earth trembles, for fear of thee, Osiris, when thou makest ascent. Ho, mother cows yonder ! Ho, suckling mother cows yonder ! Go ye behind him, weep for him, hail him, acclaim him, when he makes ascent and goes to the sky among his brethren, the gods.²

Milk, beer, etc., are provided for Pharaoh Teti of the Sixth Dynasty (Pyramid Text 707) :

Bring the milk of Isis for King Teti ; the flood of Nephthys, etc.

The departed Pharaoh might also be led to the original "Isle of the Blest" in the sky-world. In Pyramid Text 1207, the four-faced Horus is the guide. As the "Morning Star" Horus, in green falcon form, conducts the Pharaoh to "the

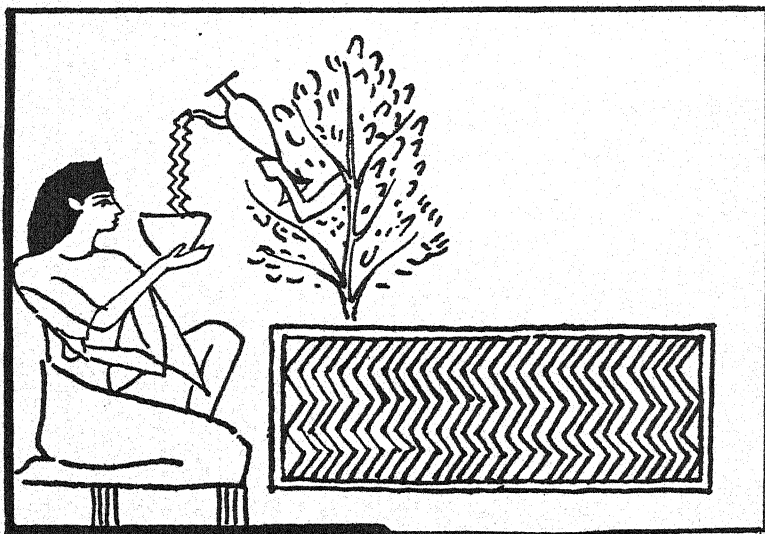


FIG. 44.

The soul drawing nourishment from the Tree of Life in the sky world. The tree, a form of the mother goddess, grows out of a tank of Life-giving water.

¹ Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, p. 130.

² Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

tree of life in the mysterious isle in the midst of the Field of Offerings" and from this tree sustenance is drawn.¹ Sometimes the departed is shown obtaining nourishment from the "milk yielding tree", as in Figure 44.

Celestial milk was supposed to nourish vegetation. In the famous Aton hymn of Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV) of the XVIIIth Dynasty, occurs the significant line regarding the sun :

Thy rays nourish every garden.

Professor Breasted notes in this connexion that "the word used (and translated nourish) implies the nourishment of a mother at the breast".² The goddess thus provides milk as the elixir of life in her various forms—as the sun, the vulture, the cow, the breasted vulture, the human Nut and the human Isis, as well as the sycamore fig, the "tree of life" in the island of the Celestial lake, whence issues the Celestial Nile as the "Milky way".

Milk was offered to the mummy when the Heliopolitan sun temple was visited, as is shown in the "Book of the Dead", chapter 172 :

Anubis wraps thee. . . . He who is Great of Seeing, the cup bearer, the cup-bearer (*wdpw*) of the great god, presents thee with his *sd*. Thou goest on thy way to cleanse thyself in the Excellent Pool. Thou makest offerings in the upper Houses. . . . Thou offerest the water of Rē in the *snbt*-ewer, (and) two great vessels of milk. Thine oblation is laid upon the altar. Thou washest thy feet upon a block of (silver) upon the bank (or bench) of the Pool of the God. Thou camest forth to behold Rē upon the Supports, the Upholders of Heaven, upon the head of Iwn-Mutef (Pillar of his Mother), upon the shoulders of Upwawet ; he (Upwawet) opens for thee the way. Thou beholdest the horizon, the pure place wherein thou desirest (to be).³

It is noted that Iwn-mutef was so called "because he was one of the supporters of Nut, cow goddess of the sky".

Mr. Warren R. Dawson informs me that in the Florence museum there is a stela (No. 2567) in which the following sentences occur :

¹ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

² *op. cit.*, p. 327.

³ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. IV.

May the Nile give thee the essence of the gods,
 May Hathor give thee beer,
 May Isis give thee milk, that thou mayest wash thy feet
 upon the stone of silver(?) and the seat (or throne) of
 turquoise.

Here "silver" is doubtful; the determinative used is of metals in general, but is also used as that of grains or seeds.

A stele in the Louvre, Paris, contains a prayer for "the white liquor of Isis" in her cow form of Hes-t, as in the Florence text, and adds "and that which the dead love to eat". In the Papyrus of Nu (British Museum, 10,477 the chapter 37A of the "Book of the Dead" begins with these words:

Spell for four shining torches which are kindled for the shining one. Behold thou shalt make four troughs of clay mixed with incense, fill them with the milk of a white cow, and thou shalt extinguish the torches in them, (*i.e.*, the milk troughs).

The references to metals indicate how highly complex these ancient texts are. In a Solar-Osiris chapter of the "Book of the Dead" it is said of the dead as he begins his solar voyage as in the Pyramid Texts:

Brought to thee are blocks of silver and [masses] of malachite.
 Hathor, mistress of Byblos, she makes the rudders of thy ship.¹

In Pyramid Text 1784 (which is damaged and difficult) it is stated that "that which he (the dead Pharaoh) eats comes from the Field of Offerings and from the lakes of malachite". It appears that malachite was the "essence" of life-giving water and the gods. That was why it was provided as "food" for the dead.

The idea that Celestial milk from the "Milky Way" nourished vegetation appears to have been imported into Europe with the agricultural mode of life. Pliny writes in this connexion:

There is a circular track in the heavens, quite visible to the human eye even, known as the Milky Way. It is the emanations from this *flowing as it were from the breast*, that supply their milky nutriment to all branches of the vegetable world. Two constellations more particularly mark this circular track, the Eagle in the North and Canicula in the south; of the last, we have already made mention. . . . This circle traverses also Sagittarius and Gemini, and passing through the centre

¹ Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

of the sun cuts the equinoctial line below, the constellation of the Eagle making its appearance at the point of intersection on the one side, and Canicula on the other. Hence it is that the influences of both these constellations develop themselves upon all cultivated lands; it being at these points only that the centre (navel) of the sun is brought to correspond with that of the earth. If, then, at the moments of the rising and the setting of these constellations, the air, soft and pure, transmits these genial and milky emanations to the earth, the crops will thrive and ripen apace; but if, on the other hand, the moon, . . . shedding her chilling dews, the bitterness thereof infuses itself into these milky secretions, and so kills the vegetation at its birth.

Pliny comments here, "The life led by the ancients was rude and illiterate; still, as will be readily seen, the observations they made were not less remarkable for ingenuity than are the theories of the present day". He also refers to the periods in which "there are exerted the sterilizing influences of the heavens".¹

The belief that the "milk" of unripened corn was of divine origin is met with in the mythology of the Zuni Red Indians:

Corn shall be the giver of milk to the youthful and of flesh to the aged, as our women folk are the givers of life to our youth and the sustainers of life in our age; for of the mother milk of the beloved Maidens is it filled, and of their flesh the substance.²

The belief obtained in the ancient world that the river which had its source in the sky carried down life-giving milk for the plants and cereals from which human beings and animals received food and medicine. Various versions of this ancient concept are found to be on record. Not the least interesting is referred to by Hermann Usener, who writes:³

✓ Springs and streams of milk and honey are parts of the equipment of the country of the gods. In the Heavenly Jerusalem there are said to be twelve wells of milk and honey. In an apocryphal vision (*Apocalypsis Pauli* pp. 23 *et seq.* in Tischendorf's *Apocalypsis apocryphæ* pp. 52 *et seq.*) the Apostle Paul is taken in a golden ship to the city of Christ; four rivers surround the city, the first of honey (in the south); the second of milk (in the west); the third of wine (in the north); the

¹ *Natural History*, Book XVIII, chap. 69 (Bostock & Riley's translation, Vol. IV, pp. 97-100).

² Cushing, *Outlines of Zuni Creation Myth* in 13th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1891-2, p. 397.

³ *Kleiner Schriften*, Vol. IV, p. 401. Leipsig, 1913.

fourth of oil (in the east). The honey stream is the place of the prophets, the milk river of innocent children and pure souls.

Usener notes that "in one of the Greek texts of this apocryphal book the milk stream is in the south and the oil in the north", and, further, that

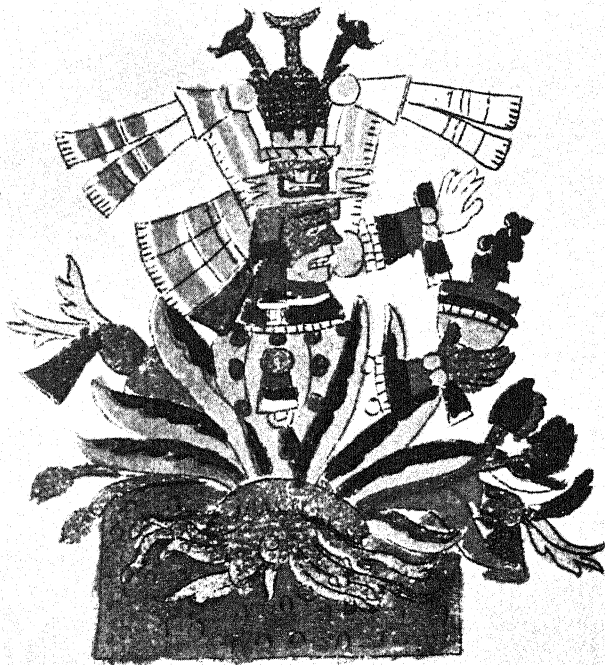
Paul is led by the angel into the second heaven, the Land of Promise, and the scene of the one thousand year Kingdom of God. There he sees a river which flows with milk and honey, and on its banks palm trees and vines of wonderful fruitfulness. The devil who wishes St. Anthusa to deny Christ, says to her, "Come and drink of the river which streams with milk and honey".

The four rivers of the four quarters are met with in Northern Mythology. When the giant Ymir had origin after a warm blast from the south caused the cold northern vapour to melt into drops, the cow Audhumbla also came into existence. "Four streams of milk", says the *Prose Edda* of Iceland, "ran from her teats, and thus she fed Ymir". These "milk rivers" were the rivers of the four quarters.

In most mythologies in which the milk rivers are met with, a cult animal is connected with the milk-yielding tree, as the cow of Hathor was with the sycamore fig. Artemis of Ephesus may be cited as an outstanding example. She protects wild animals, including the spotted deer, which is sometimes shown as her "vehicle". Her original shrine at Ephesus was, according to tradition, a primitive tree shrine—apparently a fig tree and standing stone or altar. A stone temple was erected in the seventh century B.C. Cræsus, King of Lydia, contributed liberally to the temple when it was being rebuilt in the sixth century B.C. Herodotus refers to this great, temple, comparing it to the Egyptian pyramids.

As the goddess with many breasts—the number is sometimes given as 400—Artemis stands in an Egyptian mummy case (Figure 45), on which feline and other animals are depicted. She is manifestly in this form a personification of the Egyptian sycamore fig, the fruit of which, as has been noted, adheres to the stock of the tree, and not to the extremities of the branches. The goddess is also shown sometimes with a fish depicted on her gown, and between her legs, the head pointing upwards.

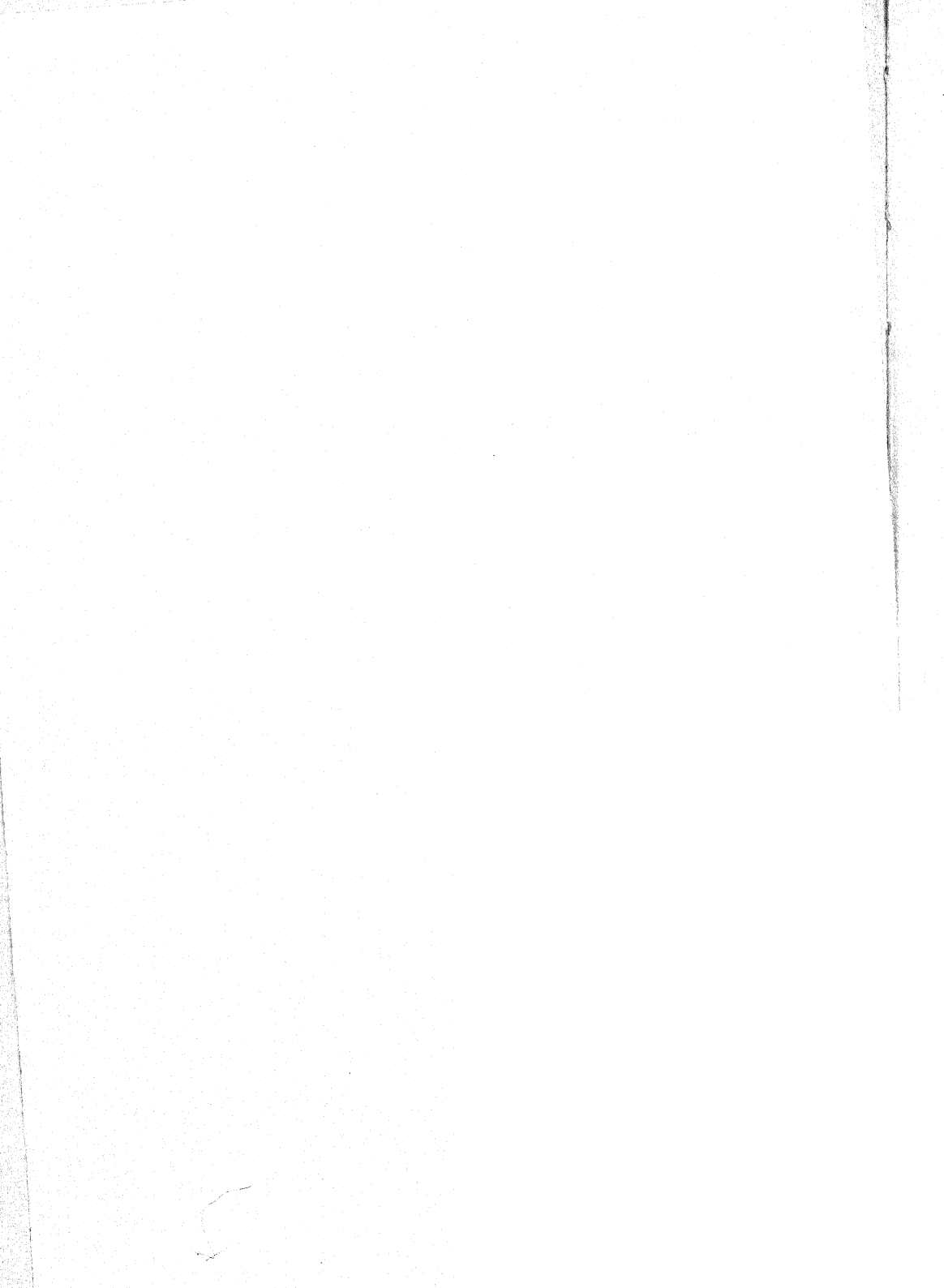
The "milk yielding tree" of the pre-Columbian Aztecs of Mexico is the maguey or agave-plant (*Agave americana*), also



*Mayauel che ha uero 400. telli et che per ella
si che e la uita di tutto paxi della guati
mauauel in uita hella prima e*

MAYAUEL OF MEXICO.

The Aztec (Mexican) goddess of the agave plant (*mētē*), reproduced from Codex Vaticanus A. This prickly cactus yields a milky fluid, which ferments and intoxicates, and is known as "pulque." The goddess, Mayauel, rises from the plant. She personifies the plant and the plant is one of her forms, as the sycamore-fig is a form of the Egyptian goddess Hathor and of the Ephesian Artemis.



called the "Century Plant". This prickly cactus yields a large quantity of "milky" juice which ferments and is known as the intoxicating "pulque" which the Aztecs called *octli*. When the ears of children were bored, they were given "pulque" in small cups and the festival was known as "the Drunkenness of Children". Apparently an ancient custom had been imported. Old World children received "milk" from a fig, nut, or other tree, but it did not intoxicate. New World "milk" of the cactus did intoxicate, but the custom was perpetuated although the results were shocking.

As Hathor of Egypt, in her tree-goddess form, personifies the sycamore fig, so does the Aztec goddess, Mayauel, personify the agave plant of Mexico (Plate XV). A mysterious white animal is associated with the plant and its goddess. It is evidently like the pulque - drinking by children a meaningless survival—an imported animal which could not be identified in Mexico by the later Aztecs who did not have domesticated animals.

Like the Ephesian Artemis, the goddess Mayauel had four hundred breasts. This form of the "milk-yielding" deity could not possibly have had origin in America. The sycamore fig suggests a many-breasted goddess among a people who referred to figs as "teats," because a milky juice oozes from these. But a prickly cactus like the agave plant (Figure 46) could never have suggested a many-breasted mother deity. The plant itself was strangely transformed (Plate XVI, B) as a religious

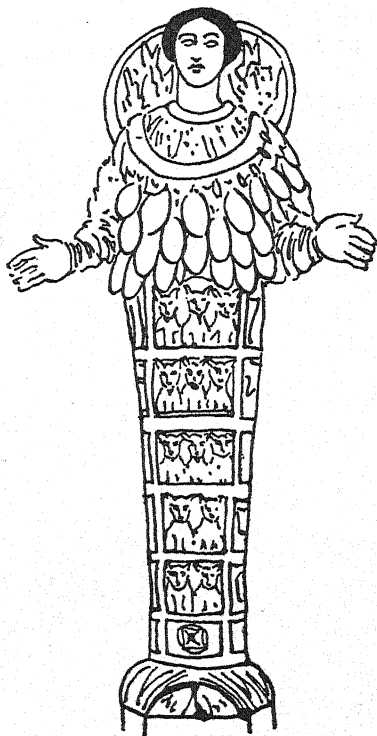


FIG. 45.

The many-breasted Artemis of Ephesus. She personifies the "milk-yielding" sycamore fig, the fruits of which were "teats"

symbol. It was re-shaped to resemble an imported tree symbol of the mother goddess. In Codex Vaticanus B 40 (=Kingsborough 88), it resembles the highly conventionalized Assyrian "Tree of Life" (Figure 47), the "trunk" retaining the spiral symbols, and the curved protuberances on the upper branches suggesting the serpents of the Egyptian winged disc (Plate II), which on the Babylonian winged disc (introduced during the Kassite period from Egypt, or one of its dependencies became horns with spiral terminations (Plate II, Figure IV).

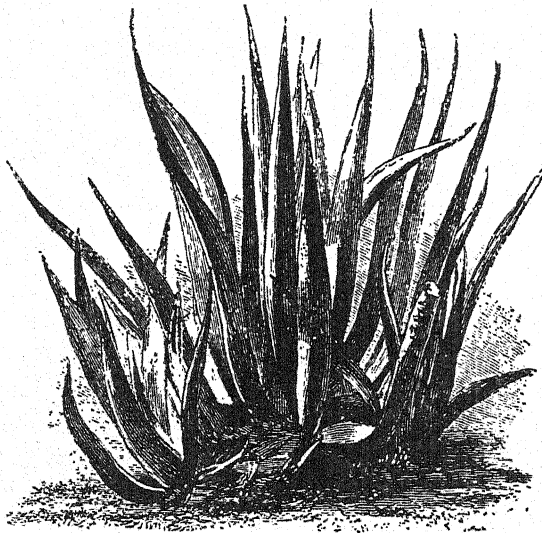


FIG. 46.
Agave Plant of Mexico

The Assyrian vine-tree (Figure 48) was also a "Tree of Life".

Another remarkable Mexican survival is the milk-yielding tree of Paradise (Plate XVI, A). In the Vatican Codex the tree is located in Chalmecaciuatl ("Children's Paradise"). Kingsborough translated the Interpreter as follows:

This (paradise) was the third place for souls which passed from this life to which the souls of children, who died before the use of reason, went. They feigned the existence of a tree from which milk distilled where all children who died at such an age were carried. They who thought that these children

have to return from thence to re-people the world after the third destruction which they suppose it has to undergo, for they believe that the world has been twice destroyed. . . .

Chichiuallquauitl . . . signifies the "tree of milk" which nourishes children who die before attaining the use of reason.¹

Tezcatlipoca, the god of the north, is shown as the guardian of this Aztec milk-yielding tree. He links with the Hindu man-god Krishna and the Hindu north-god Kubera, a god of treasure, death, etc., and apparently also with the Aztec god named Tonacatecotle, "Lord of our bodies", the "first man", like the Hindu death-god Yama, "the first who found the path (of souls) for many". This Aztec deity was under one of his names connected with the "Milky Way".²

The milk-yielding tree of Paradise is referred to in the Hindu

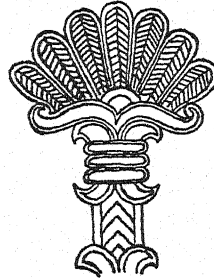


FIG. 47

Assyrian Tree of Life.

sacred work the Mahábhárata. This particular Paradise is "Uttura Kuru". In *Bhisma Parva*³ it is stated :

On the south of the Nila mountain and the northern side of Meru⁴ are the sacred *Northern Kurus*, O King, which are the residence of the *Siddhas*.⁵ The trees there bear sweet fruits, and are always covered with fruits and flowers. All the flowers



FIG. 48.

Assyrian Vine-Tree of Life (compare with Mexican Milk-Tree of Children's Paradise, Plate XVI A)

¹ Kingsborough, *Antiquities of Mexico*, Vol. VI, Plate V, p. 171.

² Kingsborough *op. cit.* p. 198.

³ Roy's Translation, pp. 24-5.

⁴ The world "spine" : a sacred mountain.

⁵ Supernatural beings.

(there) are fragrant, and the fruits, of excellent taste. Some of the trees, again, O King, yield fruits according to (the) will (of the plucker). There are again some trees, O King, that are called "milk-yielding". These always yield milk and the six different kinds of food of the taste of *Amrita*¹ itself. Those trees also yield cloths and their fruits are ornaments (for the use of man). The entire land abounds with fine golden sands. A portion of the region there, extremely delightful, is seen to be possessed of the radiance of the ruby or diamond, or of the lapis lazuli, or other jewels and gems. All the seasons there are agreeable and nowhere does the land become miry, O King. The tanks are charming, delicious, and full of crystal water. The men born there have dropped from the world of the celestials.² All are of pure birth and all are extremely handsome in appearance. There twins (of opposite sexes) are born and the women resemble *Apsarās*³ in beauty. *They drink the milk, sweet as Amrita, of those milk-yielding trees.* And the twins born there (of opposite sexes) grow up equally. . . . The people of that country are freed from illness and are always cheerful. Ten thousand and ten hundred years they live. . . . A class of birds called *Bhārundā*, furnished with sharp beaks and possessed of great strength, take them up when dead and throw them into mountain caves.

The Hindu "milk-yielding trees" (as they are called in Sanskrit), are connected with the sacred cow, Surabhi, referred to as "the mother of all Kine". A "single jet of her milk falling on the earth created what is known as the sacred and excellent 'Milky Ocean'". Her children are the four cow goddesses of the four quarters. One of them, named Analā, "begat the seven kinds of trees yielding pulpy fruits". These are given as "the date, the palm, the hintala, the tali, the little date, the nut, and the coco-nut".

The coco-nut is indigenous to Indonesia. It was carried into Polynesia and across the Pacific in pre-Columbian times. Apparently much lore went with it.

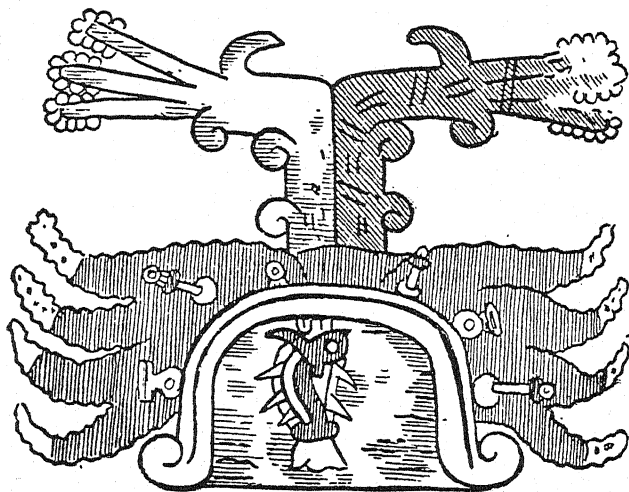
In a recent lecture before the Pan-Pacific Science Council, Dr. N. P. Larsen dealt with the "milk" of the coco-nut as a substitute for mother's milk.⁴ He told that "the old Hawaiians say that they used to use the coco-nut for food for babies". He had the coco-nut pulp analysed.

¹ Soma. An elixir of milk and honey and the juice of a herb. It was intoxicating.

² i.e. "fallen away from the Celestial State" (to be reborn on earth).

³ Female supernatural beings.

⁴ Quoted in *The Literary Digest*, New York, December 27th, 1924, from the *Honolulu Advertiser*.



MILK-TREE OF PARADISE AND AGAVE PLANT AS "TREE OF LIFE."

The "milk-yielding tree" (A) grew in the Aztec "Children's Paradise," and the children are shown in Codex Vaticanus A receiving in their hands the "milk" which drops from the fruit. Compare the highly conventionalised agave plant (B) with the conventionalised Assyrian Tree of Life (figure 47) and the "milk-yielding tree" above with figure 48.

It was surprising how it compared with mother's milk. It had all the elements. Another thing that is interesting is that the coco-nut pulp contains about three per cent. sugar. Mother's milk contains from four to seven—but we find that the coco-nut water contains a little over five per cent.

Here we have a city where I think perhaps every one of us has coco-nut trees in the yard. We are wasting the coco-nuts. I have thrown away any number. We can use some for cake, give some away, etc., but we can't use the number that are here, and we have babies who actually need milk. This coco-nut water is absolutely sterile. . . . There is no question that babies can take it . . . it is nourishing. . . .

Another cow-daughter of the Hindu mother-cow Surabhi, is Sukhi, "the mother of the parrot species"—the oracular and rain-bringing birds. In pre-Columbian America the macaw bird takes the place of the Hindu parrot.

In the *Mahābhārata*, the milk of the mother cow becomes the food of the nāgas (serpent gods) and the "Pitris" (ancestors) and the gods. The cow-mother Surabhi, is situated in the west with Varuna, god of waters :

It is in this region that Surabhi, repairing to the shores of the extensive lake adorned with golden lotuses, poureth forth her milk.

The rivers have their sources in this region and are "mixed with her milk".¹

The ancient Hindus attached importance to all plants which yield a milk-like fluid :

The plants, descended from Angiras, that grow upon the mountains and in the plains, shall be for us rich in milk, auspicious, comforting to the heart.²

As the beliefs connected with the milk-yielding tree of life drifted eastwards, so did they drift westward. My dear friend, the late Dr. Alexander Carmichael, Scotland's most industrious and enthusiastic folk-lorist, who has recorded much that collectors of tales overlooked, refers to a Hebridean "maiden queen" who is evidently an ancient goddess.³ This "maiden",

¹ *The Mahābhārata* (*Udyoga Parva*, pp. 309 et seq, *Adi Parva* p. 163 and *Vana Parva*, section C1, Roy's translation).

² *Hymns of the Atharvaveda* (*Sacred Books of the East*) Vol. XLII, p. 43.

³ *Carmina Gadelica*, Vol. II, pp. 247 et seq.

as he shows, "dwelt in the beauteous bower of the single tree where she could see the whole world and where no fool could see her beauty". She invited women to her knoll and came forth from her tree with her "cup", a blue-eyed limpet, which contained "the ais (milk) of wisdom". Some foolish women arrived too late and "there was no wisdom left for them". According to a Gaelic poet the goddess was attired in emerald green, silver and mother of pearl. It is manifest that the arbitrary association of a deity with a sea-shell, magic milk, a tree, a knoll, silver and mother of pearl, did not have origin in the Hebrides. The "maiden queen of wisdom" who personified the milk-yielding tree, links with other deities of like character.

Edinburgh has its fairy-hill called "Calton", which the "fairy boy of Leith" was wont to visit so as to take part in fairy revels. The name Calton is a close rendering of the Gaelic *Calltuinn*, which means "hazel grove". In modern Gaelic the hazel is *call*; in Early Irish, and in Welsh and Cornish, the form as Dr. Macbain has shown,¹ is *coll*. The suffix surviving in the "ton" of "Calton" was used in connexion with the hazel and not with any other tree. It may be compared with the suffix "tin" in *gestin*, the ancient Mesopotamian name of a sacred tree and a compound of the words *ges*, "wood" and *tin*, "life".

The hazel was in ancient Scotland and Ireland a sacred tree. In Keatings' *History of Ireland* occurs the passage :

Coll (hazel) indeed was god to Mac Cuil, and Eathur was his proper name and Banbha his wife.

The hazel "tree of life" grew in the Celtic Paradise of Avalon (Apple land), and gods and men partook of its life-giving nuts. Nine sacred hazel trees grew beside a sacred pool and the salmon swallowed the red nuts and thus got their red spots. He who tastes of the juice of the "King of Salmon" as did Fionn (Fingal) acquired prophetic power. The hazel provided fire-sticks for the production of sacred fire—"fire from heaven",—and was therefore connected with the sky-goddess of Scotland, who thundered from her cloud-chariot and flung down fire balls. The green hazel nut contains a milky

¹ *Etymological Gaelic Dictionary*, Stirling, 1911.

fluid, and the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, Colonsay, informs me that an elixir still remembered by the folk is

cìr na meala 'is bainne nan cnò:

("comb of honey and milk of the nut"). The writer, in his boyhood, collected the milk-yielding hazel nuts at the request of an elderly female relative so that the "milk" might be given to a newly-born baby, just as "fig-milk" was, and is still, given to newly-born babies in Greece.

✓ Rome—the very name of Rome preserves the memory of the ancient milk-yielding tree of life. In old Latin *ruma* and *rumen* signified milk and the teat that produced it. One of the ancient names of the Tiber was *Rumon* and the sky and mother goddess associated with the "Milky Way" was *Deva Rumina*. Under the milk-yielding fig-tree on one of the banks of the Tiber Romulus and Remus, the twins, were suckled by the she-wolf form of the milk-giving and life-giving goddess.¹

St. Augustine confesses that when he was a Manichæan he believed in the superstitions connected with the "milk-yielding" fig tree. He was

insensibly and step by step drawn on to such follies, as to believe that a fig wept when it was plucked, and the tree, its mother, shed milky tears. And if some saint should eat the fig, plucked though it had been by another's guilt, and not his own, and should inwardly digest it, he would breathe out angels from it, and in very truth, in the groaning of his prayer and heartburn, particles of the Deity: which particles of the most high and true God would have remained bound in that fig, unless they had been set at liberty by the tooth or stomach of the "Elect" saint. And I, miserable, believed that more mercy was to be shown to the fruits of the earth, than men, for whom they were brought forth, for if any one an hungered, not a Manichæan, should ask for any, a morsel, if given to him, would seem to be sentenced to a sort of capital punishment.²

Laufer, dealing with the Chinese manna problem, writes:

Garcia da Orta described several kinds of manna, one brought to Ormuz from the country of the Uzbeg under the name *xirquest* or *xircast*, "which means the milk of a tree called *quest*, for *xir* (read *šir*) is milk in the Persian language".

¹ Siret in *L'Anthropologie*, Tome XXX, pp. 235, et seq.

² *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (English translation, London, 1895, p. 45).

Paper-mulberry is referred to as *Ku*, as are also cereals. Laufer shows that this word "had the significance of milk", and "as the bark of this tree contained a milk-like sap", the word *Ku* "was transferred to the tree".¹

✓ Other trees besides the sycamore-fig were sacred in ancient Egypt. These included incense-bearing trees and trees that yielded oil, etc. Curative herbs and plants were likewise sacred. Mugwort, for instance, was sacred to Isis. Pliny gives the particular variety as *Absinthium marinum* or *Seriphium* (? *Artemisia Judaica*) and says "the best is at Taposiris in Egypt" and that "a bunch of it was carried at the fête of Isis". *Absinthium* was, in pre-Columbian Mexico, connected with the goddess Chalchihuitlicue. She is associated with the plant, as Seler has shown in *Codex Borgia* in which a bunch of dried herbs is placed above her. Children were sacrificed to this goddess at the hill called Yauhqueme ("covered with *Artemisia*"). Seler refers to her "healing draughts of physic".

The intimate connexion between the Greek goddess Artemis and Mugwort (an *Artemisia*) is fully emphasized by Dr. Rendel Harris.²

As the fig-tree yielded for the ancients "milk of life", so did the vine tree, which exudes a watery fluid, yield "water of life". Dr. Langdon shows that the Sumerian mother-goddess was *d. ama gestin*, "Mother Vine-stalk", and had a temple at Lagash: she was also called simply *d. gestin*, "Goddess Vine-stalk". When this deity was connected with the sky her name was changed to *gestin-anna*, "Vine-stalk of heaven", and this term, Dr. Langdon says, "was understood to mean 'heavenly mother goddess of the vine'". She was subsequently known as *Ninā*, which means "Queen of the waters". Dr. Langdon, discussing the origin of this deity, writes:

The vine goddess is probably much older than the corn goddess Nisaba, but they are closely related, and both were identified with Virgo the constellation, which represents the goddess with an ear of corn.

In Sumeria she was connected with the scorpion "and with water crustacea, such as crabs, lobsters, etc.", and "her Semitic astral title, *namaššū*, 'water crustacea', gave rise to an artificial Sumerian name of a constellation *nu-muš-da*,

¹ Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*. Chicago, 1919, pp. 346 and 558.

² *The Ascent of Olympus*, Manchester, 1917.

identified with Adad, god of rain, and identified by me with Pisces Austrini or the southern sign of the fish, since an astronomical text states that it rose and set with the sign of Pisces". The Sumerians ultimately referred to the goddess as Ninā, "lady of waters", a form which survived as Nanā, and as *Ešha*, "goddess of the fish-house" (the sea).

The vine-goddess had an original connexion with Tammuz. One of this god's forms was Ningišzida, which, Dr. Langdon thinks, "probably means 'lord of the faithful wood'", and refers to the god "as the incarnation, either of the vine or perhaps the cedar". An early name of the divine son was *ab-u*, "father of plants and vegetation". Dr. Langdon writes in this connexion :

The dying god who represents the elements of fresh water is a type developed by a people after they settled in a land dependent upon irrigation.¹

Tammuz was wailed for in the Mesopotamian mid-summer. In the sixth century B.C., his worship was known in Jerusalem. Ezekiel refers to the custom :

Then he brought me to the door of the Lord's house which was toward the north ; and behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz.²

Apparently Tammuz had originally a connexion with the Great Bear constellation and the Pole Star, as well as with the water-yielding vine.

Parasitic plants were sacred. Standish H. O'Grady gives from Irish lore the following reference to the woodbine (honeysuckle) :

Monarch of Innisfail's forests the woodbine is, whom none may hold captive ; no feeble sovereign's effort it is to hug all tough trees in his embrace. The pliant woodbine if thou burn, wailings for misfortune will abound.³

As has been indicated in the chapter devoted to the spiral, climbing plants which ascend in spiral fashion and trees and plants with leaves arranged in spiral lines, ascending to the right or to the left, became sacred to the ancient people. The sacred mistletoe twines to the right on various trees, and

¹ S. Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar*, Oxford, 1914, pp. 1, *et seq* and 42 *et seq*.

² *Ezekiel*, Chap. VIII, verse 14.

³ *Silva Gadelica*, Vol. I, p. 278. London, 1892.

chiefly on the black poplar and pines, and less frequently "on walnut trees, limes, elms, robins, willows, ashes, white thorns, pear trees, medlars, damsons, almond trees, and on the various species of *Sorbus*. Mistletoe has also been found by way of exception upon the oak and the maple and upon old vines.

. . . The birch, the beech and the plane, are avoided by the mistletoe".¹

Some vines coil around trees and other plants forming spirals; others attach themselves by means of adhesive discs to upright surfaces. In an interesting article in *The Nature Magazine* (Washington, 1923), Mr. Frederick Brooks writes in this regard:

Some vines in twining always bend to the right and others always bend to the left. The climbing garden bean is a good example of the vines which always rise by twining to the right. Wherever the cultivated or wild runner beans grow, whether feeble or strong, in sunshine or shade, every part of the main stem will be found bending constantly to the right in climbing its support. The common hop vine is just as constant in its inclination to the left. . . . Among certain groups of twining vines there are interesting departures from this rule, which show that plants of one family, or even of one genus, do not always twine in the same direction.

Mr. Brooks deals also with the spiral tendency which occurs in the twisting growth of trees:

Our native chestnut is very apt to have a twisting grain, and the twist is much more likely to be towards the left than towards the right. Beech trees, also, have a tendency to twist towards the left. Staghorn sumach almost invariably winds to the right. . . . The maple turns to the left and the sour-wood to the right.

Mr. Brooks notes that scientists have not yet made any very satisfactory attempt to explain "why so many plants of twining habits have adopted definite and constant directions of curvature", and says:

It has been suggested that in some species of vine the tip of the growing plant is attracted by and drawn towards the sun, resulting in a left, or "anti-clockwise", curvature, while in the other species the tip is repelled by the sun, causing it to bend to the right in a "clockwise" fashion. Whatever the

¹ Anton K. von Marilaun, *The Natural History of Plants*, Vol. I, p. 250 (English translation) London.

cause, many plants have developed this peculiar way of manifesting a sense of direction, and good illustrations of the trait are to be seen in almost any lawn, garden or forest.

Early man, who attached a religious value to the spiral, was much more interested in the problem which, of course, he solved in his own peculiar way. The twisting parasites and twisted trees became sacred and they were supposed to influence human beings for good or for evil. Twisted trees were once upon a time of magico-religious importance in England. Brand, in his *Popular Antiquities* under "Palm Sunday", writes in this connexion :

Stow, in his *Survey of London*, 1603, p. 98, under "Sports and Pastimes", tells us that "in the weeke before Easter had ye great shewes made for the fetching of a *twisted tree* or *with*, as they termed it, out of the woodes into the Kinge's house, and the like into every man's house of honor or worship.

Dr. Rendel Harris, in his *The Ascent of Olympus*, deals at length with the ivy which embraces the oak and was depicted climbing round a stone pillar surmounted by the head of a deity, and makes reference to the pair of "Pompeian statues of Bacchus and Ariadne standing on ivy-clad pillars". He traces the "ivy-clad herm" through Siberia to the Far East.¹ The sacred mistletoe also travelled far. Dr. Rendel Harris writes in this connexion :

The discovery of the primitive sanctity of ivy and mugwort and mistletoe makes a strong link between the early Greek and other peoples both East and West, and it is probable that we shall find many more contacts between peoples that, as far as geography and culture go, are altogether remote.²

The Ainu of Japan, the Rev. John Batchelor, informs us, "hold the mistletoe in peculiar veneration" and make use of the mugwort herb.

Some kinds of trees are called "bad" and are supposed to be unlucky. . . . The guelder rose, alder, elm, poplar, birch, hydrangea, and walnut are among them. Any of these trees may be used for the purpose of bringing down curses on one's enemies.

The grape vines (actinidia) were specially sacred, and Mr. Batchelor writes regarding these :

¹ pp. 7 *et seq.* and 96 *et seq.*

² p. 100.

The *actinidia* have their origin in Paradise. Now, all the trees of Paradise are of silver, gold and bronze. After God had created the world he sent Aioina down to inspect it. Upon arrival he discovered that there were no *actinidia*. . . . He therefore returned to Paradise and fetched one silver and one gold *actinidia* and one bronze grape-vine. The grape-vine was climbing up a bronze tree, while the silver and golden *actinidia* were entwined round a silver and golden tree respectively. Thus it happens that these once heavenly vines are now upon the earth. . . . In Paradise the soil is metal, and all things which grow out of it are endowed with strength and life.¹

Here we have trees connected with metals and the sky world. In the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh trees are connected with precious stones.

When Gilgamesh passes through the dark mountain cave of the Mountain of Sunset, in his search for the Western Paradise, he reaches Paradise where he beholds trees laden with precious stones. It is told of the chief tree in this garden :

Precious stones it bore as fruit,
Branches hung from it which were beautiful to behold
The top of the tree was lapis lazuli
And it was laden with fruit which dazzled the eye
of him that beheld.²

Trees of silver and gold, with gems instead of blossoms or fruit, are met with in Hindu, Chinese and Japanese stories regarding Paradise. Hercules saw apples of pure gold in

Those Hesperian gardens found of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves and flowery vales.

Among the many wonders referred to in Chinese writings is a starry milk-stone. Laufer writes regarding stone from a mountain on Sumatra :

Ma Ā describes this stone as being green in colour and without speckles ; those with gold stars, and when rubbed yielding a milky juice, are the best.³

Trees were connected with standing stones. In ancient Egypt the pillar symbol of the goddess and the tree symbol were interchangeable, and both were similarly adored by cult

¹ *The Ainu and their Folk-lore.* pp. 156-8, 222 and 383.

² L. W. King *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 167.

³ B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, Chicago, 1919, p. 526.

animals (Figure 49). The pyramid-form shrine, the mountain of dawn, plants, the baboon, and the cow with the sun between

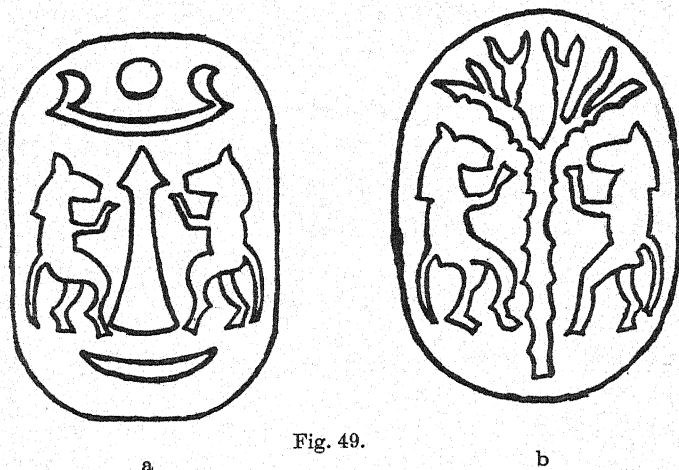


Fig. 49.

Baboons adore pillar and tree symbols of the Egyptian mother-goddess

her horns, were combined in the complex symbolism of Egypt (Figure 50). As the tree and mountain (world pillar) were

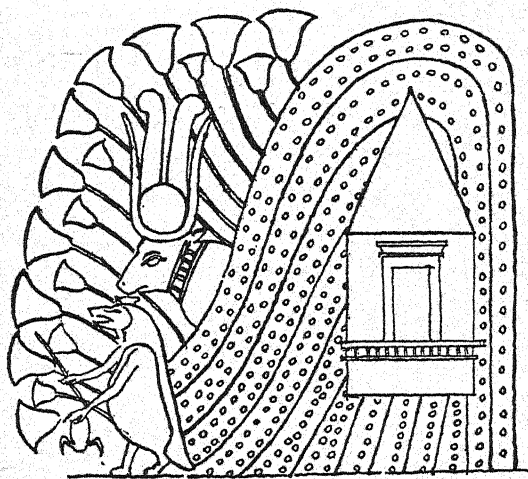


Fig. 50.

Hathor Cow at Sunset Hill

both forms of the mother-goddess, the tree might be shown giving birth to the sun (Figure 51).

The connexion between sacred trees and standing stones can be traced in India, where megaliths were, as a matter of fact, erected under trees. Tacitus refers to the Groves of Mona (Anglesea), in which there were "altars".¹ There are many dolmens on the island.

The Council of Rouen, in the seventh century, denounced all those "who offer vows to trees, or wells, or stones, as they would at altars".

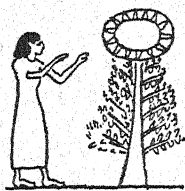


FIG. 51.

Egyptian Goddess-
tree gives birth to sun

Similar practises were condemned by the Council of Arles (A.D. 452) and the Council of Toledo (A.D. 681). At the Council of Nantes the bishops and their servants were exhorted "to dig up and remove and hide in places where they cannot be found those stones which in remote and woody places are still worshipped and where vows are still made". A decree of the time of King Canute condemns and forbids

"the worship of the sun and moon, fire, fountains, stones, trees and all kinds of wood".²

The Gaulish name *Nemeton* signified "shrine in a grove", and in early Christian times, both in Ireland and Scotland, *nemed* or *nemet* was the name of a chapel. Apparently the early Christians took over, not only the sites, but the names of the Pagan places of worship. "*Nemus*" ("a grove", in Latin) comes from the root *nem*, as do the Gaelic names for heaven, the pearl, the sacred grove and the stone shrine in a grove. The Celtic goddess "*Nemëtona*" was evidently connected with all these.

Much speculation has been indulged in regarding the original significance of the megalithic monuments of the Celtic area, but these are of little value without reference being made to surviving traces of the beliefs connected with them, and the records found in ancient manuscripts. The Celts erected and used standing stones for religious purposes.

Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, for instance, has attempted, although he ignores Celtic evidence, to account for the distribution of megaliths in Britain by assuming that they were erected in those areas where trees, in his opinion, did not grow. He thinks these treeless areas, which for all we know, may have been

¹ *Annals*, XIV, 30.

² *Ancient Man in Britain*, p. 147.

thickly covered with prickly bushes, etc., were favoured by the early agriculturists, and writes :

Men lived on the country they dwelt in. Consequently the regions most thickly inhabited were those of great natural fertility, by which is meant regions immediately open to pasturage and agriculture without much initial expenditure of labour and clearing.¹

Forests could be set on fire. The Khonds of India still clear ground by setting fire to trees, etc.

But this theory was formulated without giving due consideration to the Scottish evidence. Imposing stone circles are found in such isolated and semi-barren areas as Stennis, in Orkney, and Callernish, in Lewis. The men who erected these circles ignored the inviting areas on the mainland, including those parts of the Black Isle and Easter Ross where the soil is extraordinarily rich—I have seen a farm with six feet of a black loam above four of clay—and also the sheltered glens with stretches of good soil and good pasture. Although tall trees did not flourish beside the Lewis and Orkney megaliths, and other megaliths in semi-barren areas throughout Scotland, it should be borne in mind that the sacred trees were not the largest. The hazel, for instance, is found where neither oak nor beech can flourish, and it was called a "god". Ivy similarly grows in semi-barren areas and even on the face of a wind-swept shoreland cliff, and it was sacred, like the hazel.

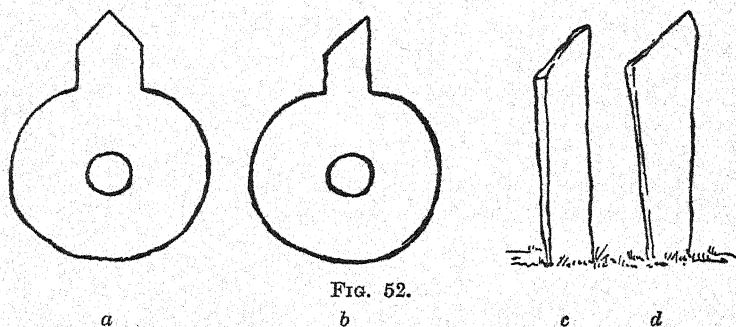


FIG. 52.

Jade and Stone Symbols

At the same time, megaliths were erected in areas where the soil is good and tall trees grew and still grow.

¹ *The Geographical Review*, New York, April, 1922. p. 260.

An interesting fact regarding Celtic religion is that it included the worship of rivers, lakes, wells, and the heavenly bodies, and also the worship of standing stones, which are, in Gaelic, sometimes "idols" and sometimes "stones of worship". "There was", says an old Gaelic (Irish) poem, "worshipping of stones in Ireland before the coming of Patrick". Gildas, the sixth-century churchman, informs us that the British pagans in England were wont to pay "divine honour" to

hills, and wells, and rivers. Many Celtic river names are those of deities. There are Gaelic texts which refer to sun worship.

In many stone circles there are pointed stones and sidewise-sloping stones shaped, or selected because of their shape, like those in Stennis, Orkney (figure 52, C and D). It may be that like the Chinese religious symbol (Figure 52, B), these stones were specially connected with the worship of mountains and rivers. The other Chinese symbol (Figure 52, A), was used in sacrifices to the sun, moon, planets, and constellations.¹ The world-wide distribution of megaliths suggests the world-wide distribution of beliefs connected with megaliths. In some areas these

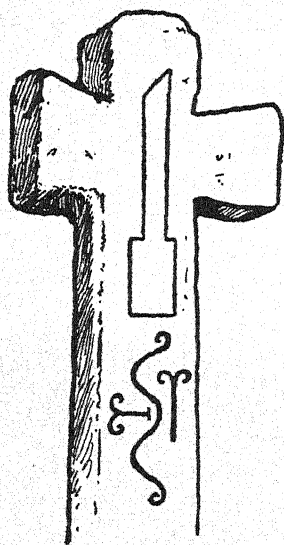


FIGURE 53.
Symbols on Carnac Cross

beliefs may have overflowed into places where no megaliths were erected, or have survived.

A Christian cross at Carnac in Brittany has on it a pillar-symbol, with sideways-sloping top (Figure 53), and it may be a relic of the persistence of mountain and river worship during early Christian times when, as there is evidence to show, many people were only half converted.

Celtic pagan beliefs and practices survived for centuries. It does not follow, however, that the Celts introduced into Western Europe all the elements of the religious system we refer to as "Celtic". They met and mingled with the Iberians

¹ These are jade emblems and are given by Dr. Laufer in *Jade*, p. 144. Plate XVII.

and others, and a great deal of culture-mixing must have taken place. Very ancient beliefs and customs, no doubt, survived among the mixed populations in the Celtic area.

There was always a very definite reason for the worship, by Celts and others, of trees, shrubs, etc., ridiculous as a given reason may now appear.

The Rev. John Batchelor informs us that among the Ainu, the willow is "an especially sacred tree". They believe that the human backbone is the seat of life, and that "when God formed man in the beginning, He made his spine out of willow wood". That is why "the human spine is so very pliable and elastic". When "a person becomes very old his back bends like an ancient tree".¹

Trees, stones, horns, mountains, etc., were backbone symbols. The sky was supported by trees, or pillars, or horns, or legs and arms, or by mountains. As has been stated, the Hindu Mount Meru is the "world spine".

These connexions are found to be world-wide, and many more instances could be given than those mentioned in this chapter. It is manifest that tree symbols cannot be separated from the symbols of the seasons, the symbols of the heavenly bodies, etc., and that they must be considered in their association with the ancient concepts partly expressed by the swastika and spiral. When ancient man connected trees and stones, horns and pillars and mountains, rivers, lakes and heavenly bodies, one with another, he did so because to him all were parts of a perfect whole.

¹ *The Ainu and their Folk-Lore*, pp. 85-7, 222, 235.

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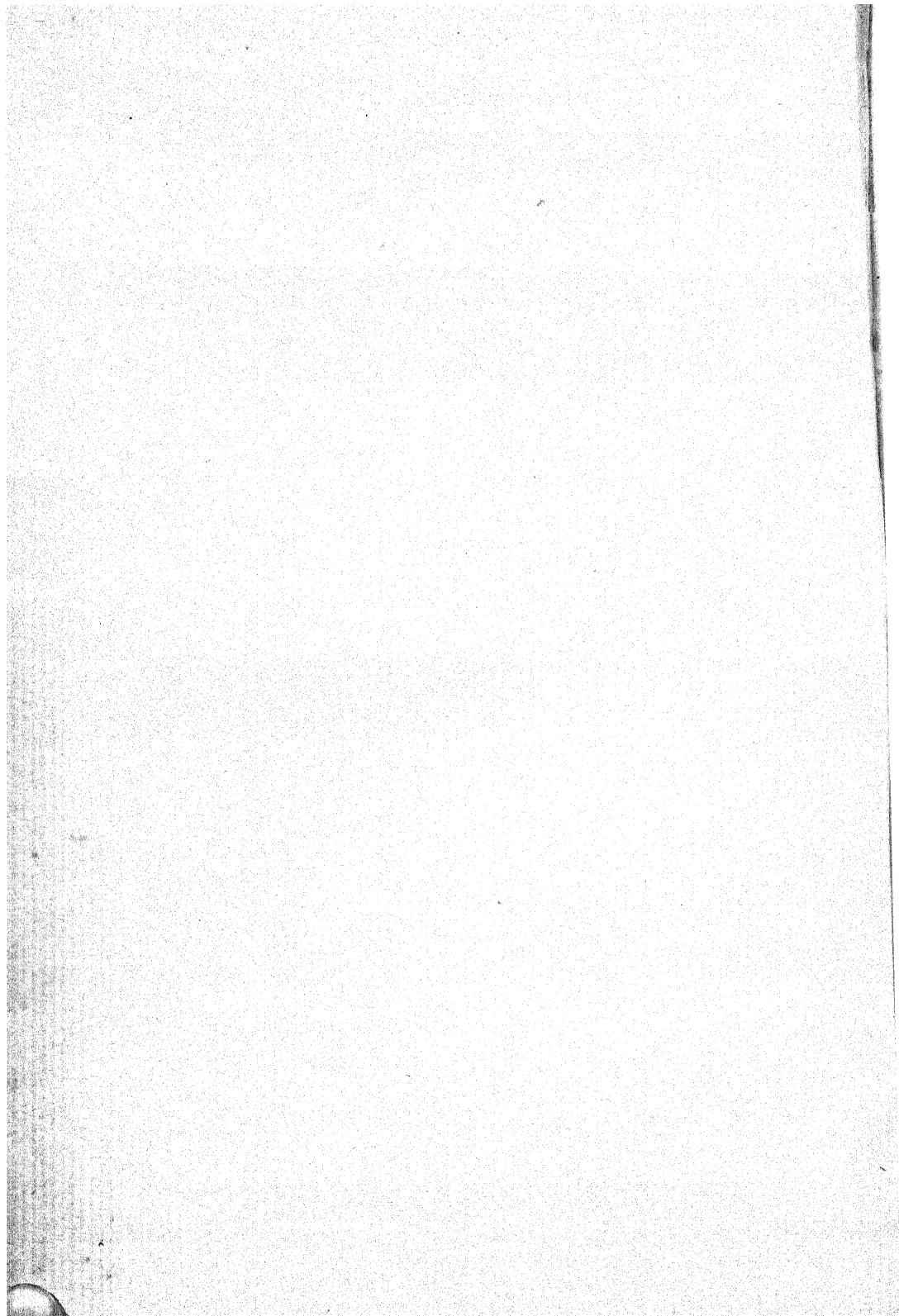
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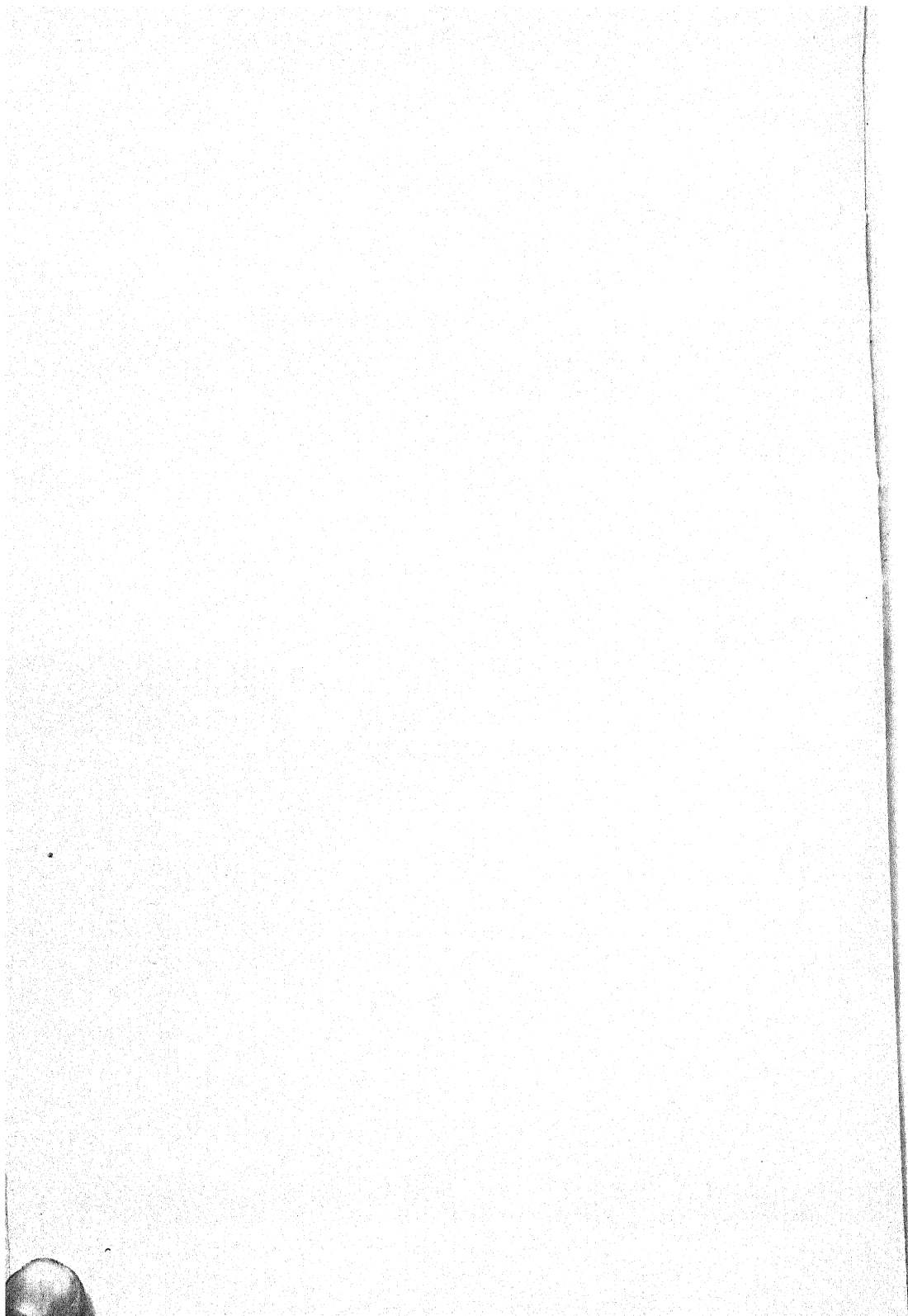


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In the Sections devoted to MODERN HISTORY the majority of titles will be announced later. Many volumes are, however, in active preparation, and of these the first to be published will be . .

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